Hafa Adai!

SUNDAY

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Labor upholds MBI's termination of employee. **PAGE 2**

New law clips Tinian mayor's appointing power. **PAGE 3**

2 lawyers' suspension stopped

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court on Friday stopped the suspension of lawyers Reynaldo O. Yana and Antonio M. Atalig, who are both counsels for Angel Malite estate administrator Jesus C. Tudela.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo's Jan. 15, 2008 amended order is stayed with respect to the suspension of Yana and Atalig, said the high court's order signed by chief justice Miguel S. Demapan and associate justices Alexandro C. Castro and John A. Manglona.

The justices said that, as a general principle, a trial court using its contempt power to suspend attorneys affects the CNMI Supreme Court's authority to regulate the practice of law and affects the independent operation of other Commonwealth courts and judges.

See HIGH on Page 4

NEW DÉCOR? JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Betel nut stains are splattered on a police car parked in front of the Department of Public Safety's traffic section building near the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe yesterday.

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you support the idea of stopping future automatic increases in the CNMI's minimum wage?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Indoor Plants

If you love indoor plants, but can't seem to find the time to care for them, you're not alone.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING... Page 10

Tight Race

Three days after voting ended, the race for Democratic delegates in Super Tuesday's contests was still too close to call.

UNITED STATES...Page 17

Farewell

Heath Ledger's family joined celebrities and other mourners Saturday to bid farewell to the actor.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 21

Chamber president optimistic for 2008

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president James T Arenovski prefers to look at the CNMI economy this 2008 in an optimistic light, saying several recent developments in the business front have proved encouraging.

Arenovski

Arenovsky, who is also the president of Delta Management Corp., says he is optimistic about the islands' future despite the upheavals it experienced the past couple of years due to the exit of Japan Airlines and the pullout of the garment industry—once the Commonwealth's bread and butter.

He said there continues to be some rays of hope and gave as examples the opening of several businesses on island (example: the 360 Restaurant and another new restaurant soon to open on the ground floor at the Marianas Business Center).

Arenovski stated that new businesses would provide new job opportunities and business for wholesalers, a soothing balm that could remedy the exodus of thousands of Chinese workers from the garment industry and the low numbers of tourists from Japan.

See NEW on Page 4

War demands strain US military readiness

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—A classified Pentagon assessment concludes that long battlefield tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with persistent terrorist activity and other threats, have prevented the U.S. military from improving its ability to respond to any new crisis, The Associated Press has learned.

ON THE NET
Defense Department: http://www.defenselink.mil

See US MILITARY on Page 4

U.S. Army Sgt. Steve Stutzman, 32, from Nappanee, Ind. patrols with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment in Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad, Iraq in this Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2008 file photo.

AP

Around the CNMI

NMI ban on scuba-spear fishing helps wrasse population growth

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The CNMI is the only jurisdiction in the Pacific to ban scuba-spear fishing, which is seen as a primary factor why the islands still teem with Napoleon wrasses, a type of fish that is being fast depleted in other parts of the world.

According to the Division of Fish & Wildlife, scuba spear fishing is a type of fishing that is potentially the cause of the rapid decline of Napoleon wrasses in other areas.

"The use of scuba-spear has probably been the single most important cause of the decline of the Napoleon wrasse worldwide," said DFW fisheries research section supervisor Michael Trianni.

The CNMI has outlawed the use of scuba-spear in 2002 and has also placed restrictions on the use of monofilament gill, surround, and drag nets.

These actions, Trianni said, have provided protection to juvenile wrasse that utilize lagoon and reef flats to grow.

It's been noted that the Napoleon wrasse is a target of live fishery in the Pacific.

Its numbers are declining in other areas of the Pacific such as Indonesia, the Philippines and other locales where effective legislation or enforcement are not enacted.

Trianni explained that with scuba-spears, divers would fish at night when the wrasse are resting in their caves or under or in between large reef structures, making it very easy to kill them.

"The divers can then bring the fish back to the boat, offload it, and go back down to continue fishing. Catching a wrasse while free diving is much more difficult since it requires a person to hold their breath and descend to deeper waters to spear them. It is a physically challenging method, and very few people possess the attributes to be successful," Trianni said.

He said that the number of wrasses that can be killed by scuba-spear is much higher than what can be harvested by a free-diver.

DFW's Felix Sasamoto Jr. recently caught two Napoleon wrasses while spearfishing at Obyan Beach.

According to Trianni, the fact that Sasamoto was able to catch the fish in 43 feet of water is "rather encouraging."

"Perhaps the management measures that are in place are paying some dividends," Trianni said.

He added that the intent behind the ban on scuba spear fishing was to provide fish with a refuge by depth, "recognizing that there are not a lot of free-divers with the capabilities of someone like Felix."

"This action, in time, would slowly replenish the diveable fishing depths," Trianni said.

The DFW has created a marine protected depth zone throughout the CNMI for fish that are not primarily harvested by hook and line, "such as the wrasse."

In Hong Kong, a Napoleon wrasse can fetch up to about $9 a pound, otherwise $400 for a set of its lips.

It is reported that the high prices are not a result of any superb flavor or texture. Instead, eating the fish is seen as a status symbol—a representation of wealth.

The Napoleon wrasse is redlisted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

The IUCNNR are stated that the ongoing threats have caused the fish to be considered endangered and that they are not being replaced fast enough to compensate for the excess fishing rate and other threats.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
Birthday wishes go out to a mother and daughter celebrating their birthdays today, Feb.10, 2008. "Happy birthday Claire and Tamisha Lia! May the Lord bless you today and always." Love, Dad and the Chong and Sablan families.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Labor upholds MBI's termination of employee

The Department of Labor has upheld the decision of a company to suspend and terminate one of its sales representatives who left the CNMI without the management's approval.

Labor Administrative Hearing Officer Herbert D. Soll ruled that the suspension of Mario M. Diola was justified, but that the same facts would have supported discharge had the employer, Micronesian Brokers (CNMI) Inc. chosen to do so.

Soll said the prevailing facts and circumstances in this case supported the later change of position, to that of termination rather than just suspension.

Soll determined that Diola is not entitled to overtime compensation because he did not work overtime hours during his employment with MBI.

The hearing officer said Diola shall take nothing by reason of his labor complaint and that MBI has waived his counterclaim.

The complainant, Soll said, is denied rights to transfer to another employer.

"Diola's attempt to secure leave was marked by false claims and finally resulted in an unauthorized absence from work. His transparent manipulation of the system amounted to a breach of contract and justified discharge," Soll said.

Diola is a nonresident worker who was employed as a sales representative from 2002 until his departure from MBI in late 2005.

MBI is a wholesale supplier. Its general manager is Francisco Barja Jr.

In May 2002, the parties signed an employment contract and presented it for approval to Labor. It was not accepted in the form in which it was presented.

Several months after it was submitted but before it was approved, Labor objected to a provision in the contract and informed the parties of their objection.

The contract provided for a

See LABOR on Page 4

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New law cuts into Tinian mayor's appointing power

A law has been enacted to clip the power of the Tinian mayor to appoint anyone he wants to head the municipality when he is off island.

Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez, as acting governor, signed into law House Local Bill 15-67 on Wednesday.

The new law sets guidelines for the designation of an acting mayor and acting chairperson of the Tinian municipal council.

Previously, the Tinian mayor can appoint whomever he wants to serve as acting mayor when he is absent from the island.

Under the new law, the chairperson of the Tinian municipal council will assume the position of acting mayor in the absence of the mayor. If the chairperson is also absent, the vice chairperson will be the acting mayor. If both the chairperson and vice chairperson are both absent, the remaining council member will be the acting mayor. If all the members are absent, the mayor may designate anyone to take control until he or any member of council returns.

The 15th Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation said it was more appropriate to have a member of the municipal council take over when the mayor is gone, as council members are also elected officials of the municipality.

The same set of guidelines will apply when the chairperson of the municipal council is off island. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

Man gets 90-day prison time for attack on uncle

The Superior Court has ordered a 45-year-old man to spend 90 days in prison for hitting his uncle with a flashlight on the head over a land dispute.

Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona sentenced Arnold Fitipol Rabauliman to four years imprisonment, all suspended except for 90 days, for aggravated assault and battery.

Following a plea agreement, Manglona gave Rabauliman credit for the time he had already served in jail from June 18, 2007 to July 30, 2007.

Manglona directed the defendant to start serving the prison term at the Department of Corrections on Feb. 20, 2008 at 8am. Rabauliman will be released on April 8, 2008 at 8am.

After completing the prison term, Rabauliman will be placed on probation for two years. He was ordered to pay a $500 fine and a $100 court assessment fee.

The judge ordered the defendant to pay $497.50 in restitution to victim, Vicente S. Teregeyo, for medical expenses.

"Defendant shall attend church support group meetings at least three times per week during the term of probation to continue substance abuse and personal management counseling," Manglona said.

Rabauliman signed a plea agreement with the government. He pleaded guilty to aggravated assault and battery. The remaining charges were dismissed.

In her order, Manglona said the underlying cause of the incident is a familial dispute over family lot in Oleai.

The victim is Rabauliman's uncle, who suffered an open wound on the back of his head, which required four staples to close it.

According to the declaration filed by a detective, the defendant appeared intoxicated and committed the offense late at night.

At the hearing, the judge said, Rabauliman appeared remorseful and accepted responsibility for his acts.

"He willingly accepted his punishment, and appeared sincere in agreeing to take corrective actions to avoid a similar incident. He will not force himself on the family land until clear title in his name is established, and he will undergo counseling," Manglona said.

A detective stated in court papers that on June 16, 2007, Teregeyo and Edward R. Litulumar were outside their house in Oleai when Rabauliman came.

Rabauliman, who appeared intoxicated, allegedly started shouting at them.

When Teregeyo asked him why he was causing a problem, the defendant allegedly struck Teregeyo with a flashlight twice in the back of his head.

Rabauliman then punched the victim once in the back and ran into the bushy area. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

EPA to hold Pacific Islands meeting

HONOLULU—Environmental officials from the Pacific Territories will meet in Honolulu next week to improve environmental response programs of the Pacific islands.

The Pacific Basin Brownfields Response Team, which includes officials from Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Hawaii and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will meet Feb. 11 through Feb. 13.

The EPA said the goal of the meeting is to build stronger programs to prevent and respond to chemical contamination on land and water.

Brownfields are abandoned sites contaminated with hazardous chemicals.

The inaugural meeting is sponsored by the EPA and the Hawaii Department of Health. ***(Pacific Business News)***

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Meetings on Guam buildup set

The Joint Guam Program Office will begin meetings this month to collect data needed to create an environmental impact statement involving the planned move of 8,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam.

The meetings were planned with the help of the governors of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, local chambers of commerce and other community members, according to the program office's spokeswoman, Annette Donner. The meeting will not be open to the public, she said.

Participants will discuss how the increased military presence could affect education, health-care services, employment, property values, crime, cost-of-living issues and other socioeconomic issues, according to a news release from the project office.

The data gathered will be included in a draft version of the environmental impact statement, which will be available in early 2009. Public hearings will be held for community input before the final report is released in 2010. ***(Stars and Stripes)***

High court stops suspension of Yana, Atalig

From Page 1

"Accordingly, this matter requires full and careful consideration," the justices pointed out.

However, the justices said, because orders imposing sanctions for professional misconduct are distinct from the merits of the underlying case, and because the extent of a trial court's authority to suspend attorneys warrants clear direction from the high court uncluttered by ancillary matters, they find it necessary to sever the issue of attorney suspensions.

On Jan. 15, Govendo found Atalig and Yana in contempt of court and suspended them from practicing law for failing to return to the court the $1.3 million in attorneys' fees that had been awarded them in the Malite probate.

Govendo had also kicked out Tudela as administrator of the Malite estate for mismanagement. The judge said Tudela failed to object to the "inflated" attorneys' fees of $1.3 million, which was received by Yana and Atalig.

The two lawyers had appealed the matter to the high court. Atalig and Yana argued that Govendo acted in excess of his jurisdiction. The lawyers asked the high court to vacate the suspension order and demanded review of other issues in the underlying Malite probate.

The two lawyers also filed a second petition, arguing that Govendo, in suspending them from practicing in the Supreme Court, intruded on the high court's authority to regulate the practice of law in the Commonwealth.

The lawyers said they are involved in numerous cases before the high court and the trial court, so their suspension has implications far beyond the case in which the contempt action arose.

In their order, the justices said Commonwealth courts clearly have the inherent authority to discipline attorneys practicing before them.

The justices said the high court's inherent authority includes the power to suspend or disbar attorneys.

"The extent of a trial court's authority to discipline attorneys, however, is less certain," the justices said.

They said it is clear a trial court has statutory authority to punish criminal contempt, but available punishments do not include suspension.

The justices said equally well-settled is that trial courts retain the inherent authority to sanction civil contempt.

However, the justices said, the authority to suspend attorneys does not inescapably flow from a trial court's civil contempt power, and such authority has not been specifically approved by the high court.

"Rather, in finding the trial court is without power to suspend an attorney for criminal contempt, this court specifically declined to address whether the same could be achieved through civil contempt," they said.

The justices said the sole issue to be addressed is whether Govendo or any trial court judge may suspend attorneys for civil contempt.

The justices said Govendo may file a response brief by Feb. 29, 2008 and that the Commonwealth Bar Association Committee is invited to file a brief by Feb. 29, 2008.

The justices set the oral argument on March 11, 2008 in the Supreme Court.

New businesses, investments a boost to economy

From Page 1

He also said that positive developments the past few months are evident, with new charter flights from Russian (Vladivostok Air and DalAvia), resumed charter flights from Shanghai (China Eastern Airlines), and promised charter flight to Rota (Continental Airlines).

"The recent chartering of flights from Russia appeared to be very successful and will send positive news back to Russia about our destination," he said.

"Asiana Airlines' boost to our tourism economy is the highlight of 2007. NWA [Northwest Airlines] bringing in flights from Osaka is another plus, and of course the optimism that surrounds the military buildup in Guam and how it may affect the NMI. The opening of a major fast food player, Taco Bell, was also truly welcomed and added a few more job opportunities," he added.

Arenovski said that foreign students also continue to come in from Korea to study at a variety of international schools on the island, helping boost enrollment and bringing in precious dollars to the economy.

Another sign that not everything is really gloom and doom in the CNMI economy is the recent purchase of United Micronesian Development Association Inc. of Hotel Nikko Saipan.

"The most recent purchase of the Hotel Nikko [Saipan] by UMDA is another reason for optimism. These investments and commitments shouldn't be taken lightly. These investors see opportunities ahead for the CNMI and they have affirmed that with their investments," he said.

No matter how bright he peers into his crystal ball for 2008, however, Arenovski admitted that 2007 was indeed a very difficult year for the CNMI economy.

"Minimum wage, and federal and local legislation divided the island and drove many businesses, especially the remaining garments factories, to close. The seemingly endless increases in fuel prices at the pump and in our CUC [Commonwealth Utilities Corp.] bill have strained all families and businesses. These two things have lowered general morale among business owners, staff, and families alike," he said.

Arenovski said that like everything else in the world—which has its good side and bad side—the local economy would, hopefully in time, rebound.

"Most economies run in cycles, there are ups and downs. What we all control is how long we will be in that 'downward cycle.' Good, well-thought out decisions by all when deciding on our future will yield good results and the Chamber will do its part to help our political and business leaders move the NMI toward an 'upward cycle' and improved economy."

Valentine's Day walk to save WNNK

The Friends of Wakai Nekko No Kai once again held a fundraiser to help bring back the ocean university.

The Friends of Wakai Nekko No Kai, in collaboration with the Saipan Walking Association, Pacific Development Inc., Marianas Visitor Authority, and the Saipan Mayor's Office collaborated for the annual Valentine's Walk that was held yesterday.

The Valentine's Walk started at 6 am from the Garapan basketball court down to the QuarterMaster intersection on Beach Road.

All proceeds from this walkathon will be donated to the Wakai Nekko No Kai to assist its owner and president, Hideo Kato, with his present financial predicament to pay off his loan from last year's voyage.

The Friends of Wakai Nekko No Kai also sold commemorative t-shirts of Wakai Nekko No Kai at the site, with the theme imprinted on the T-shirts "SOS" or Saipan Offers Support at $10 for students and $15 for non-students and adults.

According to the Friends of WNNK, "With the overwhelming support that the Saipan Friends are now getting and with other supporters in Japan, we may be able see the arrival of the Japanese students again next year. This year's visit will not possible."

The Saipan Friends notee that Kato has been a true friend of the people of Saipan for 39 years. The 40th voyage would have been successful if not for the financial situation that Kato now faces.

'US military's readiness to respond impaired'

From Page 1

Despite security gains in Iraq, there is still a "significant" risk that the strained U.S. military cannot quickly and fully respond to another outbreak elsewhere in the world, according to the report.

Last year the Pentagon raised that threat risk from "moderate" to "significant." This year, the report will maintain that "significant" risk level—pointing to the U.S. military's ongoing struggle against a stubborn insurgency in Iraq and its lead role in the NATO-led war in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon, however, will say that efforts to increase the size of the military, replace equipment and bolster partnerships overseas will help lower the risk over time, defense officials said Friday. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the classified report.

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has completed the risk assessment, and it is expected to be delivered to Capitol Hill this month. Because he has concluded the risk is significant, his report will include a letter from Defense Secretary Robert Gates outlining steps the Pentagon is taking to reduce it.

The risk level was raised to significant last year by Mullen's predecessor, Marine Gen. Peter Pace.

On Capitol Hill this week, Mullen provided a glimpse into his thinking on the review. And Pentagon officials Friday confirmed that the assessment is finished and acknowledged some of the factors Gates will cite in his letter.

"The risk has basically stayed consistent, stayed steady," Mullen told the House Armed Services Committee. "It is significant." He said the 15-month tours in Iraq and Afghanistan are too long and must be reduced to 12 months, with longer rest periods at home. "We continue to build risk with respect to that," he said.

Other key national security challenges include threats from countries that possess weapons of mass destruction, as well as the need to replace equipment worn out and destroyed during more than six years of war.

LABOR

From Page 2

monthly salary and in place of an OT provision the word "exempt" appeared.

MBI and Barja contended that the working position is that of an outside salesman and is exempt under both federal and Commonwealth law from OT provisions.

Nevertheless, MBI agreed to amend the contract to provide for time and one-half compensation for OT hours worked.

They did not contest Labor's position. Both the general manager and Diola initialed the contract where it had been changed from "exempt" to "x 1.5 per hour" for OT.

During the entire course of his employment, after the change in the stated OT provision, from September 2002 through October 2005, Diola did not mention to MBI that OT wages were due to him.

Diola renewed his contract several times. Each time it contained the same provision for OT.

In his administrative order, Soll determined that the testimony of other sales representatives and the MBI managers is found to be true regarding the working schedule of the company.

Soll said no OT was required of sales representatives.

"Diola did not work OT. His testimony regarding OT work that he claims to have performed is found to be untrue," he said.

Diola began work at 8am each day and after necessary procedures in the company office, he would visit his sales accounts. He, and the other representatives, returned to the office from 4 to 4:30pm, turned in their paper work for the day's sales and were usually out of the premises by 5pm.

Soll said Diola did not work on Saturday as he contends. "The believable testimony of four witnesses indicates that Diola was seen on Saturday during the entire course of his employment, once or twice and in the company of his child. He was not there to work," Soll said.

The hearing officer rejected as not credible the testimony of one witness who testified that the complainant did in fact work on Saturday.

He cited that Diola had a series of problems with MBI management over the use of leave credits.

Soll said several leaves of absence were taken that did not conform to the stated leave policy.

Soll said that, in October 2005 Diola wanted to accompany his female partner to Manila where she was to undergo medical treatment.

The hearing officer said Diola had very little vacation time available.

"In an effort to get sick leave to cover the time that he planned to be away he obtained a note from a physician in Saipan that did not meet the requirement of a medical referral or even a proper diagnosis of an illness," Soll pointed out.

Diola displayed the note to a company accountant, who rejected it and told him that it was not a proper form for a medical referral.

In an apparent attempt to avoid further rejection, Soll said, Diola left the form and his leave request in the tray of the accountant and left for the Philippines. Soll said Diola left Saipan without the required approval.

Diola offered evidence that he was examined in the Philippines in the form of medical reports from St. Luke's Medical Center.

"These reports included findings on tests that had nothing to do with the reason offered to his employer to justify medical leave," Soll said.

With respect to Diola's claim for reimbursement of cell phone and gasoline expenses, Soll said this falls short of establishing that any excess in these allowances was caused by business expense.

He said Diola was given the allowances and a vehicle without restriction on personal use.

The worker, Soll said, did not prove that the use of fuel and telephone was attributable to business expense.

Soll said that during the period of suspension, MBI was justified in believing that Diola was disparaging the company.

Diola did not work OT hours during his period of employment with MBI and he, therefore, is not entitled to OT compensation. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

US lawmaker calls for WESPAC probe

The chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has requested the U.S. Government Accountability Office investigate the expenditures of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

In the letter to the committee, Waxman writes, "In June 2007, a number of Hawaiian nonprofit organizations raised serious allegations regarding the inappropriate use of government funds and unethical conduct by WESPAC and its Executive Director. More recently, credible sources have also contacted the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to raise similar concerns about the conduct of V/ESPAC and its Executive Director.

"Given the importance of ensuring that the regional fishery council tasked with managing an area of nearly 1.5 million square miles functions properly, the Committee asks that you undertake an investigation into WESPAC's expenditures to verify whether the council and its Executive Director are properly using and accounting for government funds."

Waxman's inquiry was heralded by some local fisherman yesterday. In an e-mail, local fisherman William Aila said, "We are pleased Representative Waxman sees fit, based on the evidence, to initiate an investigation of WESPAC and Kitty Simonds in regards to possible breaches of fiduciary duty."

Also in the e-mail, Linda Paul, executive director of Aquatics for the Hawaii Audubon Society, said, "We support a well conducted and impartial investigation into the allegations that a Federal advisory body has been spending Federal funds attempting to influence Hawaii State fisheries policy." ***(Honolulu Advertiser)***

Vales nominated to US Naval Academy

Resident Representative Pete A. Tenorio has nominated Jamie Rochelle L. Vales for appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, Class of 2012. Vales was nominated on Jan. 22 to fill the vacancy that will be created once Midshipman Caroline C. Lynch graduates this spring.

Vales, 17, is the daughter of Roger and Celia Vales of Saipan and is currently a student at Marianas Baptist Academy.

"I believe Jamie is an exceptionally qualified candidate. Her solid academic record, favorable letters of commendation, active participation in athletics, community service and leadership activities convince me that she is indeed committed to enter into an educational endeavor that would provide her with the rare opportunity to become an officer in the United States armed services and a future leader of our great country," said Tenorio.

The next step in the selection process is for the Academy's admission board to make the final determination on Tenorio's nomination of Vales. By late April, the Academy will issue the majority of appointments and notify nominees on their acceptance.

Current cadets attending U.S. military academies nominated by Tenorio include:

■ Caroline Claire Lynch and Jun Vicente Mihara Chong at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Resident Representative Pedro A. Tenorio with his nominee to the U.S. Naval Academy Class of 2012, Jamie L. Vales.

■ Michael Ho Kim at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York

■ Myung C. Kim at the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, CO

In accordance with U.S. Public Law 104-106, one of Tenorio's privileges as Resident Representative includes nominating students to some of the best educational institutions in the country. The nomination process begins in the fall of each school year. The Resident Representative may have one constituent attending each academy at any one time. Should a cadetship become available before Jan. 31, due to a cadet separation, the Resident Representative will have an opportunity to nominate candidates for that vacancy. Nominations are based on the students' academic achievements, SAT/ACT scores, extracurricular and community activities, athletic abilities, leadership skills and the desire to pursue a career in the military.

Students interested in seeking a nomination to the United States Service Academies are encouraged to apply early. To apply for a nomination, students should write a Letter of Intent to the Office of the Resident Representative expressing his or her desire to attend an academy. Nomination requests are to be submitted no later than December 15 of a student's senior year. Letters and applications should be submitted to the Office of the Resident Representative, 2121 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008 or to the District Office at P.O. Box 504959, Saipan, MP 96950.

For further information, contact Clarissa Sablan at the Saipan District Office, (670) 664-5651/2, fax (670) 664-5654 or Herb Yamada in Washington, D.C. at (202) 673-5869, fax (202) 673-5873. ***(PR)***

Zoning Law Free Training!

The Zoning Office will give another public training session on the new Saipan Zoning Law. A special invitation is extended to those who plan to: build a new commercial or residential structure; repair or expand an existing structure; move a business into a new or existing building; maintain an existing sign or make a new one; continue or start an adult business; subdivide property; start a home business; or continue operating or maintaining a nonconforming building, or sign. The training is free and no pre-registration is required.

Where: **Multipurpose Center, Susupe**
When: **Tuesday, February 12, 2008.**
Session 1 - 8:30 am – 11:30 am
Session 2 - 1:30 pm– 4:30 pm
(same information as Session 1)

The Zoning Office in DanDan will be closed on Tuesday, February 12. Zoning staff will be available that day at the Multi-Purpose Center from 8:30 to 11:30 am and from 1:30 to 4:00 pm to answer questions and to take permit applications.

Attendees should bring a copy of the law to the training session for reference. Copies of the law and maps can be downloaded from www.zoning.gov.mp. The Zoning Office also has copies for sale for $10.00 at the 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan. Call 234-9663/7 for more information.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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The Associated Press
Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Go with the floe?

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is nearly a month overdue in making a decision on whether to list the polar bear as a threatened species. Though there's reason to view the delay with cynicism—it gave the government time to lease prime polar-bear habitat for oil exploration—this is a decision with far-reaching and potentially unintended consequences.

The polar bear would become the first species listed as a result of global warming rather than direct causes, such as construction in critical habitat, hunting or exposure to toxic substances. Beyond that, the bear doesn't appear remotely threatened at first glance. Its population has increased markedly in recent decades, after hunting laws were tightened, and is estimated at up to 25,000 worldwide, with perhaps 5,000 in Alaska. There's no evidence that the bear's numbers are declining precipitously now, the usual trigger for listing a species. It certainly wouldn't qualify as "endangered"—on the brink of extinction.

"Threatened" is another matter, requiring only a finding that if conditions don't change, an animal (or plant) is in danger of eventually sliding toward extinction. For this, the evidence is solid. Polar bears spend much of their time not on land but on ice floes, where they hunt and raise their young. The ice has been melting, and polar bears are showing signs of distress as they make longer swims. Three years ago, scientists found that some bears had probably drowned after swimming long distances, unable to find a nearby sheet of ice. At the current rate, the prediction is that 80 percent of the summertime ice floes will disappear within 20 years.

But if the reasons behind the polar bear's possible inclusion on the threatened list are indirect and complex, so are many of the possible ramifications. Drilling for oil in the bear's hunting waters would appear an obvious problem. But what about the motorists, thousands of miles away, using that oil to drive to work, emitting greenhouse gases as they go? A coal plant, a housing subdivision ... to put it straightforwardly, simply being human and alive contributes to carbon emissions.

The question of how far to go to protect the polar bear quickly becomes a debate about how much we should change our habits to slow the pace of climate change. Reports of diminished glaciers and shifting weather patterns—for all that they could cause worldwide disaster—haven't grabbed the public's imagination. A snowy white teddy bear is another matter. The polar bear gives us a tangible reason to recognize that global warming is real and that it matters. Let the conversation begin.

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The cult of Obama

By JOEL STEIN
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Stein is a columnist for the Times*. E-mail Stein at jstein@latimescolumnists.com*

You are embarrassing yourselves. With your "Yes We Can" music video, your "Fired Up, Ready to Go" song, your endless chatter about how he's the first one to inspire you, to make you really feel something—it's as if you're tacking photos of Barack Obama to your locker, secretly slipping him little notes that read, "Do you like me? Check yes or no." Some of you even cry at his speeches. If I were Obama, and you voted for me, I would so never call you again.

Obamaphilia has gotten creepy. I couldn't figure out if the two canvassers who came to my door Sunday had taken Ecstasy or were just fantasizing about an Obama presidency, but I feared they were going to hug me. Scarlett Johansson called me twice, asking me to vote for him. She'd never even called me once about anything else. Not even to see "The Island."

What the Cult of Obama doesn't realize is that he's a politician. Not a brave one taking risky positions like Ron Paul or Dennis Kucinich, but a mainstream one. He has not been firing up the Senate with stirring Cross-of-Gold-type speeches to end the war. He's a politician so soft and safe, Oprah likes him. There's talk about his charisma and good looks, but I know a nerd when I see one. The dude is Urkel with a better tailor.

All of this is clear to me, and yet I have fallen victim. I was at an Obama rally in Las Vegas last month, hanging at the rope line afterward in the cold night desert air, just to see him up close, to make sure he was real. I'd never heard a politician talk so bluntly, calling U.S. immigration policy "scapegoating" and "demagoguery." I'd never had even a history teacher argue that our nation's history is a series of brave people changing others' minds when things were on the verge of collapse. I want the man to hope all over me.

Still, I can't help but feel incredibly embarrassed about my feelings. In the "Yes We Can" music video that will.i.am made of Obama's Jan. 8 speech, I spotted Eric Christian Olsen, a very smart actor I know. (His line is "Yes we can.") I called to see if he had gone all bobby-soxer for Obama, or if he was just shrewdly taking a part in a project that upped his Q rating.

Turns out Olsen not only contributed money, he volunteered in Iowa and California and made hundreds of calls. He also sent out a mass e-mail to his friends that contained these lines: "Nothing is more fundamentally powerful than how I felt when I met him. I stood, my hand embraced in his, and ... I felt something ... something that I can only describe as an overpowering sense of Hope." That's the gayest e-mail I've ever read, and I get notes from guys who've seen me on E!

When I started to make fun of Olsen, he said: "I get that it's a movement. But it's not like a movement for Nickelback. For the first time, we should feel justified in our passion. You don't have to feel embarrassed about it, buddy." It was a convincing argument until he told me he cried during an Obama speech. That did not help me feel less lame.

So to de-Romeo-ize, I called someone immune to Obama's hottie dreaminess: a white suburban feminist baby boomer. To get two things done at once, I called my mother.

My mom, a passionate Hillary Clinton supporter, immediately attacked Obamamania. "Some part of me wants to say, `People wake up. He has no plans.' I get frustrated listening to his speeches after a while," she said. She also said that the new vacation house in Key West is really great and her vertigo hasn't been acting up.

I started to feel a little more grounded again. Did I want to be some dreamer hippie loser, or a person who understands that change emerges from hard work and conflict? "People are projecting an awful lot onto him," Mom said. "Almost like what was that movie with, oh, the movie, oh God. That English actor, he practically said nothing. Oh shoot. He was the butler and everybody loved him and what he was thinking and feeling. Do you know the movie I'm talking about? You don't." Hers, of course, is the demographic most likely to vote.

But she's right. Obama is Peter Sellers in "Being There." As a therapist, she's seen the danger of ungrounded expectations. "You feel young again. You feel like everything is possible. He helps you feel that way and you want to feel that way; it's a great marriage. Unfortunately, the divorce will happen very quickly." Mom is the kind of realistic tough-talker who isn't afraid to make divorce analogies to a child of divorce.

"We want what he represents," she said. "A young, idealistic person who really believes it. And he believes it. He believes he can change the world. I just don't think he can."

Thing is, I've watched too many movies and read too many novels; I can't root against a person who believes he can change the world. The best we Obamaphiles can do is to refrain from embarrassing ourselves. And I do believe that we can resist making more "We Are the World"-type videos. We can resist crying jags. We can resist, in every dinner argument and every e-mail, the word "inspiration." Yes, we can.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

French women don't get fat. They do get lucky.

By PAMELA DRUCKERMAN
Special to The Washington Post

Pamela Druckerman is the author of Lust in Translation: The Rules of Infidelity From Tokyo to Tennessee.

If I have to get old, I want to do it in Paris.

It's not because of the dank weather, the constant personal snubs or a fetish for unpasteurized cheese. It's because, quite frankly, I'd like to keep having sex.

In the United States, my odds would be grim. Up through our 40s, we American women manage to arrange romps on a fairly regular basis. But the latest national statistics show that by our 50s, a third of us haven't had sex in the last year. By our 60s, nearly half have gone sexless in the previous year. Once we hit our 70s, most of us might as well hang up an "out of business" sign. (Needless to say, men fare much better.)

So much for the gym-bodied baby boomers who promise to make 60 the new 40, using Botox as an aphrodisiac. Among today's 50-plus women, the problem of sexlessness is as bad or worse than it was for older women two decades ago.

But not in France. French women simply don't suffer from the same dramatic, post-40s slide into sexual obsolescence. Just 15 percent of French women in their 50s and 27 percent in their 60s haven't had any sex in the past year, according to a 2004 national survey by France's Regional Health Observatory. Another national survey being released next month will report that cohabiting French women over 50 are having more sex now than they did in the early 1990s.

Try not to hate them: French women don't get fat, and they do get lucky.

The idea that older women are desirable goes right to the top. Before Nicolas Sarkozy hooked up with his new bride, 40-year-old Carla Bruni, a French magazine suggested some matches for the newly divorced president, including 50-ish TV presenters, writers and an extremely buff sailing champion. After all, Sarkozy, 53, had just been dumped by his then 49-year-old wife Cecilia, who had famously obsessed him and who had had no trouble finding other suitors.

This post-menopausal sexiness is palpable here. In the lingerie section of an upscale department store, I recently watched a gray-haired man earnestly inspecting the black lace bra and panties that his similarly aged companion had just picked out. "That's just what's needed," he clucked, handing his credit card to the clerk.

So why are older American women sitting around feeling bad about their necks, while their sisters across the ocean—craggy necks or not—are off being seduced?

For starters, French women (begin ital) d'un certain age (end ital) have much better role models. Sure, Hollywood still employs a handful of preternaturally preserved actresses in their 50s and above. But even these women, such as Sharon Stone, tend to be famous precisely because they've defied the laws of aging. And they're mostly denied unfiltered close-ups and romantic leads.

French cinema, however, is in the throes of a revival for 50-ish actresses, many of whom got their starts as fresh-faced teenagers in the early 1970s. These women aren't all airbrushed versions of their former selves, nor does the interest in them seem to be mostly nostalgic. "They have roles not as old women but as women. Which means they're still considered to be desirable," says Daniele Laufer, author of the book "50 Ans? Vous Ne Les Faites Pas" ("50 Years Old? You Don't Look It"). "Fifteen or 20 years ago, you wouldn't have seen this. I think they refuse to give up power."

The actress Nathalie Baye, who's 59 and looks it, has made some 20 films in the past decade, including romantic roles. She told an interviewer that at the 2003 Cesar awards (France's version of the Oscars), Meryl Streep asked her whether "things were as difficult in France as in the U.S. for actresses of a certain age. I told her that thankfully, French cinema is very faithful to its women."

These French actresses are products of the generation of '68, France's sexual and social revolution. But in the French version, women weren't expected to forgo high heels and chivalry in exchange for equality. So it's not surprising here when successful women retain their charms. In the United States, the two can seem mutually exclusive. The right-wing talk-show host Rush Limbaugh felt free to question Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's candidacy in December by sneering, "Will Americans want to watch a woman get older before their eyes on a daily basis?"

Of course, things aren't all rosy in French bedrooms. France has its share of lonely widows and divorcees. All the French women I spoke to also stressed that older women must keep up their looks to stay appealing. Liftees are becoming a more frequent sight.

In the United States, men tend to treat older women who've done age-erasing work with either horrific awe or chaste respect. France is more sanguine. Last year, Paris Match magazine put a topless photo on its cover of the 50-something Arielle Dombasle—looking like a reengineered 16 year old—to celebrate her new cabaret act.

American women seem to have internalized the message that wrinkles aren't sexy. A 2006 study called "Sex After 40?" led by Laura Carpenter at Vanderbilt University concludes that middle-aged women who live alone have trouble seeing themselves—and others—as potential sex partners. And then there's the famous demographic bottleneck: Men die sooner, and many of the ones left standing prefer younger women. Impotence can leave even married couples sexless.

All that happens in France, too, of course. But when the French writer Elisabeth Weissman interviewed dozens of older French men for the book "Un Age Nomme Desir" ("An Age Called Desire"), she found that "they see in maturity a form of eroticism." French Playboy's photo spread on the 43-year-old Juliette Binoche in November carried text that gushed, "The more time passes, the more her inner beauty glows." Wisdom—combined with regular exfoliation—is sexy here.

Another reason older French women have an easier time is that they're apparently less choosy about their bedmates. A study of older Americans published last year in the New England Journal of Medicine found that 88 percent of sexually inactive women ages 57 to 64 had actually met a willing partner. But about half the women said that they hadn't met the right person.

This isn't just a matter of taste. The Vanderbilt study also found that middle-aged, unmarried men and women in the United States suffer from "sexual conservatism," even if they've been married before. For many women, the study notes, "disapproval of sex before marriage applies to every marriage."

Older French women seem open not just to non-marital sex but also to the extramarital variety. Overall self-reported levels of infidelity are practically identical in France and the United States. But because the taboo on cheating is weaker in France, what would be guilty flings in America can blossom into long love affairs over here. "When (French) people have multiple partners, they have stable partners, and not one-night stands. This is not the case in the U.S.," says the French researcher Alain Giami, who co-authored a paper on French and American sexual habits.

None of the Frenchwomen I spoke to thought married men made ideal companions. But all of them said that they could be a reasonable compromise until the "right" fellow comes along. "It saves your life, you live like a woman," says Nathalie Samson, 50, who dated a married man for six years until she met her current boyfriend. (He was single.)

Samson, who co-owns a boutique in Paris, isn't the lithe Frenchwoman of the American imagination. But she's wearing a stretchy black dress with a plunging neckline and flipping through pictures from her recent birthday party, in which her 52-year-old boyfriend gazes at her with obvious rapture. She describes this period of her life—post-divorce, her three kids out of the house—as her most uncomplicatedly sexy one. "Now there's just the seduction between a man and a woman," she says.

Older women in Paris don't actually look any better than they do in New York. The difference is that the French typically don't see sex as a privilege for the young and beautiful. They see it as one of life's most basic pleasures—something women or men would not give up without a fight ... or in my case, perhaps a second passport.

Letters to the Editor

A good use for CIP funds

Washington Representative Pete Tenorio's call for utilizing CIP funds to stabilize CUC's infrastructure is a valid and beneficial use of CNMI resources.

Another valuable and beneficial use for a small portion of CIP funds would be for the CNMI to use some of these funds for the improvement of public health infrastructure, specifically the implementation of a CNMI-wide Electronic Medical Records system.

The use of EMR throughout the CNMI would have two immediate effects that directly benefit all residents. First, the use of EMR would improve the quality of care by allowing healthcare providers with immediate and comprehensive medical information for almost all CNMI residents whether they are being treated at a private client or the Commonwealth Health Center. This access allows providers to fully assess the medical needs of patients and would minimize diagnostic costs, reduce prescription errors, and provide a continuity of care that is essential in treating a community such as the CNMI, which is prone to chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, renal disease and even tuberculosis.

The second crucial benefit would be to reduce the overall costs of healthcare by allowing for timely processing of employer payments and insurance claims. These timely reimbursements are essential for the effective operation of any healthcare facility and especially important for the Commonwealth Health Center. Without controlling healthcare costs, the quality of care will surely diminish, as we have seen recently with the loss of pharmacy personnel and other critical providers.

While the use of CIP funds to improve healthcare may seem exorbitant, the relatively modest cost of implementing an electronic medical records system throughout the CNMI (roughly between $500,000 and $800,000) will be quickly offset by the savings generated. Efforts to implement such a system have long been underway at CHC, but a commitment in funding is needed, not only from the Governor, but also the Legislature and Washington Representative's Office.

What is needed is consensus and leadership from them and also from the citizens of the CNMI to begin to control the looming public healthcare crisis that's just as dangerous as any power outage.

Jim Griffin
Pittsburgh, PA

NMC'S peril, a parent's woes

As a parent who is sending a non-U.S. citizen student to NMC, I panicked when I read the news that the college may have to shut down in six months. After all, the significant amount of money that I'm paying NMC every semester is no joke. I read the article over and over, hoping to find a reason to believe that I just misread the article. To me, NMC simply could not just shut down!

My curiosity took me to the website of Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Unfortunately, I cannot find any other document except for the WASC Public Statement on the Baccalaureate in Elementary Education, Northern Marianas College. The statement mentions that in a meeting held in February 2007, the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities acted to place the baccalaureate program in Elementary Education, Northern Marianas College on Probation until June 30, 2008.

What caught my attention was this *"Specifically, Senior Commission concerns include "inadequate and unstable administrative leadership, inadequate faculty and staff, cuts in public funding, inadequate planning and resource allocation in conformity with the NMC mission, serious deficiencies in the quality of education and services offered to students at off-campus sites as well as continuing failure to institutionalize program review, systematically assess student learning, or develop programs in relation to the needs of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Island's labor market." Additional concerns include "lack of institutional autonomy vis a vis the Commonwealth government, an inexperienced and thus far untrained Board of (Regents), finacial instability, drops in enrollment, and completion rates."*

Am I missing something? It only says Elementary Education but how come they are talking about closing the college? I'm sure other parents like me will not get a good sleep until we hear from NMC president Carmen Fernandez. This is a serious matter .You need to keep the parents and your students aware of the real deal, especially after this shocking news came out.

Irene N. Tantiado
Capital Hill, Saipan

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.
▲85° ▼74°	▲84° ▼75°	▲84° ▼75°	▲84° ▼73°	▲84° ▼73°

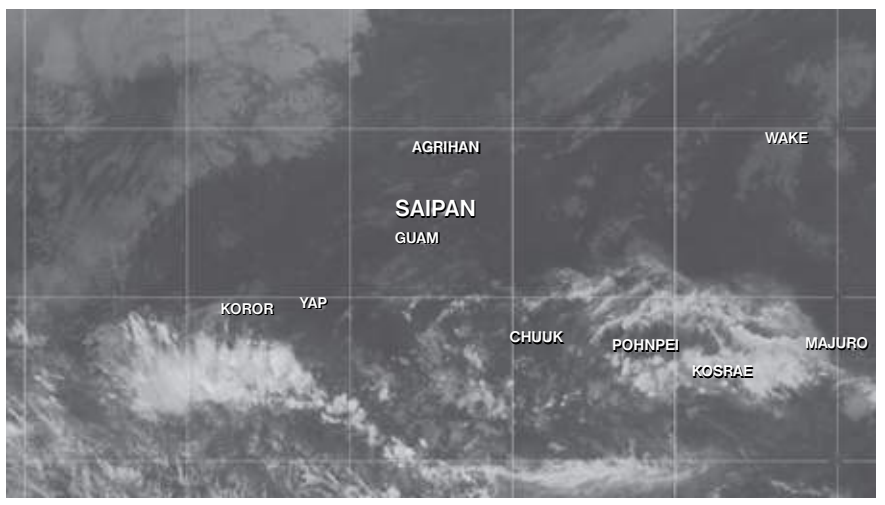
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼77
Yap	Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼78
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲85	▼74
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼76
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Thunderstorms	▲77	▼68
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲37	▼19
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲61	▼54
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲79	▼68
London	Mostly Sunny	▲55	▼43
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲70	▼51
Manila	Cloudy	▲89	▼74
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲73	▼58
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲77	▼60
New York	Flurries	▲32	▼24
Osaka	Cloudy	▲44	▼30
Paris	Partly Sunny	▲53	▼36
Pusan	Sunny	▲49	▼30
Rome	Partly Sunny	▲53	▼35
Salem	Showers	▲49	▼38
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲61	▼44
Seoul	Sunny	▲34	▼21
Tokyo	Showers	▲45	▼34
Washington, DC	Windy	▲38	▼25

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SATURDAY, FEB. 9, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25n163e to 20n150e, then continues as a shear line to 19N140E. A developing warm front then extends from 19N140E to 22N130E and beyond to a low-pressure system centered south of Okinawa. Cloudiness and light showers are found along and up to 200 miles north of the cold front and shear line as far west as 147E. Farther west, extensive cloudiness and areas of rain associated with the warm front are present between 130E and 140E from 18N to beyond 25N. A surface trough stretches southeastward from 3N130E to EQ137E. Scattered showers are found along and north of the trough in the area bounded by 6N130E to 7N136E to EQ145E to EQ142E to 3N137E to 3N130E back to 6N130E, just south of Palau. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms within 120 miles either side of a line from 5N155E to 6N163E to 4N179E. This includes Kosrae, but is south of Pohnpei and Majuro. A weak trough that extends from 17N165E across Wake island to 22N168E is producing scattered light showers within 100 miles either side of the trough axis.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:40AM Today	Low Tide:	0.0 Feet
10:06AM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
4:19PM Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet
9:47PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:44AM	6:19PM
Monday	6:44AM	6:19PM
Tuesday	6:43AM	6:19PM
Wednesday	6:43AM	6:20PM
Thursday	6:42AM	6:20PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:39AM	9:06PM
Monday	9:19AM	10:02PM
Tuesday	10:00AM	11:00PM
Wednesday	10:46AM	12:01AM*
Thursday	11:36AM	1:04AM

*Following Day

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- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
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- BUSINESS
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- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 2, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Saipan-Beijing			
CA 988	3:15am	7:00am	1,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Beijing-Saipan			
CA 987	6:05pm	1:55am+1	4,7
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Thursday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal
9:00 AM Family Worship
3:00 PM Choir Rehearsal
Wednesdays at Parsonage
7:00 PM Prayer, Share and Care

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church (Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

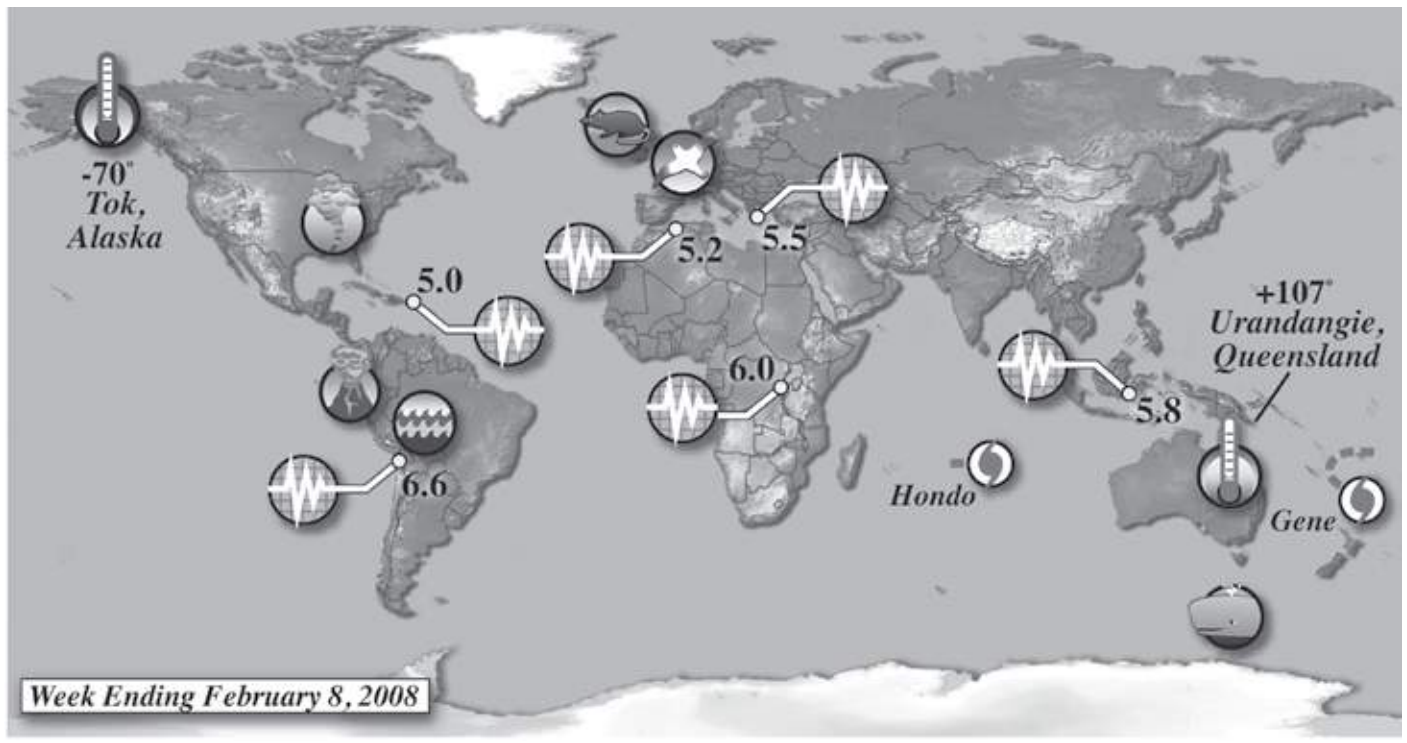
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon
English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By STEVE NEWMAN



Rat Check

Fears that rats escaping a grounded fishing boat may have infested one of the United Kingdom's most important bird sanctuaries sent officials scrambling to catch any potential rodent invaders. The Spanish trawler Spinningdale ran aground on the remote archipelago of St. Kilda during a violent storm off the northwest Scottish mainland on Feb. 1. The group of rocky islands is home to 250,000 puffins, 30,000 pairs of gannets as well as large numbers of fulmar and storm petrels. A unique species of mouse also inhabits the outcroppings, which have remained free of ground-based predators since the human population left in 1930. Traps with bait made of chocolate-flavored candle wax were quickly dispatched to the affected island. Experts will examine teeth marks left in the bait to determine if any rats managed to escape the ship.

South American Floods

Torrential downpours caused disastrous flooding across a wide area of South America from Ecuador to Brazil and northern Argentina, killing nearly 50 people and making thousands of others homeless. The worst-affected areas have been the Bolivian lowlands and Peru's Ucayali Amazon rain forest area. Flooding has also destroyed vast tracts of crops, damaged bridges and washed out stretches of highway.

Tropical Cyclones

Cyclone Gene lost force over cooler waters of the South Pacific after inflicting significant damage to Fiji and Vanuatu.

■ Cyclone Hondo threatened shipping lanes as it moved over the open waters of the central Indian Ocean.

Winter Twister Swarm

Dozens of tornadoes tore across five southern U.S. states, killing at least 56 people and leaving a trail of destroyed homes and other buildings. Thirty-one people were killed in Tennessee, 13 in Arkansas, seven in Kentucky and five in Alabama, according to state officials. A baby swept away by one of the tornadoes in Tennessee was found unscathed in a nearby field. Officials estimated that 67 twisters were spawned by a rapidly moving cold front. Not since April 1998, when tornadoes ripped through Alabama and Georgia and caused 48 fatalities, has a string of storms been as deadly. While tornado season in the United States generally starts in March and continues through the summer months, winter tornadoes have become an almost annual occurrence in recent decades.

Andean Eruption

Ecuadorian officials ordered 3,000 villagers to evacuate their homes near the slopes of Tungurahua volcano as the mountain shot columns of ash miles into the air, killing five people. The country's Geophysics Institute warned that the recent intense activity shows no sign of abating. A massive eruption in 2006 buried entire villages in ash.

Earthquakes

A series of strong earthquakes in East Africa's Great Lakes Region killed 43 people and injured hundreds of others in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and western Rwanda. Quake damage left about 4,500 people homeless.

■ Earth movements were also felt in northern Algeria, western Greece, northeastern Indonesia, northern Chile and Puerto Rico.

Whaling Resumes

Japan resumed its slaughter of whales in the Southern Ocean after lack of funds for fuel forced Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd anti-whaling protest ships to stop their chase of the Japanese fleet. Whaling operations were suspended on Jan. 12 due to interference by both environmental groups. Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith expressed his outrage to Japanese officials over the resumption of whaling in the Australian Whale Sanctuary off Antarctica. "Our starting point and finishing point is that the Australian people want to see an end to the slaughter of whales," Smith told reporters.

Winter Nurturing

A team of British researchers has found that feeding your backyard birds during winter not only helps them to survive the cold months, but also promotes more springtime breeding. The team from the University of Exeter and Queen's University Belfast provided some birds with extra food, such as peanuts, over the winter while leaving other birds in the study group to fend for themselves. "The extra food we put out for birds contained fat, protein and carbohydrates, which may make the female bird stronger and more able to produce eggs," said researcher Stuart Bearhop. The team speculates that providing extra food in backyard feeders year-round is also likely to be very beneficial to birds. It is estimated that Britons and Americans put out more than 500,000 tons of food for birds each year.

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OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Labrador survives six story garage leap

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Authorities say a Labrador retriever named Jet really can fly. The 65-pound dog survived a six story leap from a Tampa airport parking garage and lived. Police and Jet's owners and vet say the 2-year old dog accidentally leaped over a parking garage railing on New Year's Eve and walked away from the landing —60 to 80 feet below. Jet spent the night at a vet's office with a collapsed lung and some cuts and bruises. But by the next day, the dog was getting antsy again. His owners are Clayton and Jessica Tieman of Largo. They named Jet for the sheen of his black fur, not for any flying abilities. They say their next dog will get a more earthly name, perhaps Scooter.

Body lay in UK apartment for 8 years

LONDON (AP)—Workers responding to neighbors' complaints of a bad smell coming from an apartment in western England discovered a body that lay decomposing on a couch for years while another resident lived there, officials said Friday. The British Broadcasting Corp. reported that neighbors of the Bristol, England apartment had been complaining for years about the stench and cleaning workers found the body. Neighbor Michael Stone told the BBC he assumed the tenant suffered from poor hygiene and even offered him air fresheners. A spokesman for Bristol City Council said the body was thought to have been in the apartment for at least eight years. The identity of the man, who was thought to be in his 70s when he died, has not been released. Police arrested the apartment's tenant after the body was found Jan. 30, but concluded the death was not suspicious. The occupant, also in his 70s, apparently failed to report the death because he suffers from mental health problems. Bristol Coroner's Court launched an urgent inquiry on Friday to determine how the corpse had gone unnoticed for so long. A local lawmaker expressed disbelief at the find. "How can any of us possibly understand how there could be a dead body in somebody's flat for five years, or maybe even as long as eight years, and nobody know and nobody notices, and life appears to go on as usual," Labour parliamentarian Dawn Primarolo told BBC television.

Good Housekeeping

Houseplants are making a comeback

By JESSICA DAMIANO
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

MELVILLE, N.Y.—If you love indoor plants, but can't seem to find the time to care for them, you're not alone. And the tropical-plant nurseries who breed houseplants know it. "There aren't many stay-at-home moms who have time to dust off their plants anymore," said Lori Vanderlaske, tropical-plant buyer for Hicks Nurseries in Old Westbury. "People are busy, and I've been noticing a lot of easy maintenance, lowlight, sturdy plants coming on the scene."

As a result, houseplants are growing in popularity. "In the '70s, everyone was buying up houseplants. Hanging planters were very popular back then. And then the trend died," says Donna Moramarco, education coordinator at Martin Viette Nurseries in East Norwich. "But now houseplants are making a really strong comeback," she said.

The most popular trends focus on color, texture and style. And the most unusual plants are getting the most attention.

What's more, many of them don't require a lot of care.

Anthurium "Pacora" is a new introduction that sports big red blooms with white spadices. It doesn't need sunlight, and it blooms fairly easily with just a little fertilizer. "It practically takes care of itself," says April Schnitzer, greenhouse manager and green goods buyer at Martin Viette. "I've even seen them bloom in basement apartments."

Then there's the so-called "ZZ" plant, Zamioculcas zamiifolia, which Schnitzer describes as "architectural" in form. The lowlight plant, native to eastern Africa, commands attention with its glossy foliage and upright habit. The best part? "It doesn't need a lot of water. In fact, the drier you let it go, the better. You can't kill it," Schnitzer said.

Expect to see a new variety of Dracaena (corn plant) called "Santa Rosa," which has a broad green leaf with a wide cream margin. If you think you've seen it before, you might have. " 'Santa Rosa' is one of those plants that's old but new again," says Schnitzer, explaining that it has just been reintroduced after a few years of unavailability. "Pele" and "Harry" are other new Dracaena varieties recently introduced.

Schnitzer says her favorite this year is a pink Aglaonema (Chinese evergreen) cultivar called "Blush." Aglaonemas have long been valued for their durability, and while other varieties are attractive, "Blush" is a real showstopper.

"It gives people the option to get a little bit of home decor from their plants, besides just greenery," Schnitzer says, while Moramarco calls it "a designer's dream."

And that snake plant? It's still around—and it's more interesting than ever. Notable varieties of the virtually indestructible, low-maintenance Sansevierias include "Moonshine," which boasts unusual dark green-streaked silver leaves, and cylindrica, a flat structured plant with atypical round, cylindrical leaves.

The most interesting trend in houseplants this year isn't a color or a texture. It's a purpose. According to the results of a research study conducted by NASA scientist B.C. Wolverton nearly 25 years ago, plants are the most efficient and cost-effective method of "indoor air pollution abatement." In other words, growing houseplants in your home will result in cleaner air in your home. And the idea has finally caught on.

"The whole 'green sustainability' movement has become more mainstream in the past year, with people thinking about their carbon footprints and wanting to do healthy things for their families," according to Jennifer Nelis of the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association. The nursery industry has always been environmentally conscious, but Nelis said some businesses are changing their product lines to meet the current demand for air-purifying plants.

While it's long been known that plants release oxygen into the air and remove carbon dioxide, the "green living" movement is promoting Wolverton's findings that plants actually remove indoor air pollutants as well. Think you don't have any? If you've ever purchased a new sofa or carpeting, had your wood floors refinished, hung wallpaper or painted your house, you've likely inhaled benzene, formaldehyde and other toxins. Then there's cigarette smoke, treated wood and cleaning solvents.

Schnitzer tells of an experience she had shortly after a new door was installed in her home. "I had a vicious migraine headache that lasted from five minutes after I got home until 10 minutes after I left the house." She blames the chemicals in the door.

Older, drafty homes are spared indoor pollution to a great extent because a drafty house gets a constant supply of fresh air. But newer, "energy-efficient" homes don't allow for sufficient air exchange, and that can lead to a buildup of harmful gasses, according to Mobee Weinstein, a horticulturist with The New York Botanical Garden. "The more we tighten everything up, the more we contain ourselves in a toxic environment," she said. "The recent 'greening' trend is raising awareness of this and that might be why houseplants are getting more attention."

Wolverton's findings recommend keeping one 8-inch or 10-inch potted plant per 100 square feet in your home. In addition, one small (4- to 6-inch) plant should be in each of your "personal breathing zones." Think desks and night stands.

Certain plants have been shown to reduce indoor air pollutants by as much as 87 percent in 24 hours, according to the study. Add to that the benefits of increased air humidity and the relaxing effect that caring for houseplants can offer, and incorporating them into your indoor environment becomes a no-brainer.

NEWSDAY

Houseplants are coming back into vogue as busy consumers look for plants that are easy to care for and can improve indoor air quality.

Choose plants wisely

(c) 2008, Newsday

Before buying an indoor plant, it's important to determine whether it's right for your home:

The most important criterion is its light requirement, which will be noted on the plant tag. Think about where your windows are. Do you have the right light levels available for the plant? To find out, start by noting which direction the main part of your house faces. A Southern exposure offers the brightest light. Eastern and Western exposures will provide medium light, while northern exposures likely will produce lots of shadows and, therefore, lowlight situations. Where are your windows? For every foot away from a window you distance a plant, the available light drops drastically. It's also important to consider whether there are a lot of trees outside that cut down on available light indoors.

Dodge the draft. Drafts are bad. If windows aren't well insulated, or if there's an air-conditioning unit installed nearby, plant foliage will suffer. Leaves might blacken or drop. And some plants, like Gardenias, will drop their buds in drafty locations.

Get your hands on a good reference book. One recommendation: the 2005 book "Tempting Tropicals: 175 Irresistible Indoor Plants," by Ellen Zachos (Timber Press, $29.95).

Pots change their looks

(c) 2008, Newsday

Pots are getting a lot of attention. Gone are the terra-cotta pots and woven basket planters with inserts. "We're seeing a lot of shiny black and white pots," says April Schnitzer, greenhouse manager and green goods buyer at Martin Viette Nurseries in East Norwich, N.Y. Bright yellow, orange, pink and apple green in glazed ceramic and porcelain are in demand, and people don't seem concerned about matching them to furnishings, she says. "Chinese pottery is still in, but color is big."

Pop-Off Planters can be fixed to vertical outdoor surfaces with just one screw providing an instant—if tiny—private patch of green. Pop on and off to replant, tend and water.

Stud finder can see behind walls

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: What's a stud finder? And how can I hang up a coat rack without it pulling out of the wall?—Jim T., Atlanta

A: The stud finder takes the arcane art of rapping the wall with your knuckles until you find what you think might be a stud, and places it in the hands of the common man. Or woman.

Why is this important? Because any item that is intended to be hung on a wall that weighs more than five pounds—or will hold other items totaling more than five pounds—should be anchored securely to that wall. And one of the most secure anchors is a stud—not the kind we women dream of meeting, but rather, the vertical framing boards behind the drywall.

Think of your wall, the visible part with paint or wallpaper on it, as a kind of curtain. It's a bit sturdier than cloth, but not by much. It's just sheets of material known as drywall or sheet rock, placed against and hammered to what is really your wall—a bank of vertical timbers spaced about 16 inches apart. These aren't just good for holding up your drywall, they're great for holding up heavy objects like shelves and coat racks.

Unfortunately, you can't see the studs, but a stud finder can—in a way. The most common type, a magnetic stud finder, locates metal studs or nails, while an electronic stud finder senses the density between a stud and the gap between studs. Operation is simple: Hold it flat against the wall surface and move it carefully from one side to another, at least 2 feet, until a green light glows.

So, to secure a coat hanger so it doesn't fall out of the wall, locate and mark the nearest stud (or stud pair), drill holes and attach the rack to the wall.

HOME TIP: Newer apartment buildings may have steel rather than wood studs. You'll need steel-rated drill bits and metal screws to attach anything to these studs—along with the landlord's permission.

KITCHEN MAGIC

Vegetarian Bean Burritos

Serve these bold, assertive-flavored burritos with Carrot Salad and oranges. While tortillas heat, toss carrots in serving bowl with lime dressing. Then, slice and sauté zucchini, and heat beans.

COOK: 10 minutes
TOTAL: 17-18 minutes
MAKES: 4 servings

4 flour tortillas (10 inches each)
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
4 medium zucchini (about 5 ounces each), each cut lengthwise in half, then sliced crosswise
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 can (15 ounces) Spanish-style red kidney beans
1 can (15 to 19 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
1/2 (8-ounce) package shredded Monterey Jack cheese (1 cup)
1/2 cup loosely packed fresh cilantro leaves
1 jar (16 ounces) chunky-style salsa

1. Warm tortillas as label directs; keep warm.

2. In nonstick 12-inch skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add zucchini, salt, and cinnamon and cook until zucchini is tender-crisp, about 5 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, in 2-quart saucepan, heat kidney beans with their sauce and black beans just to simmering over medium heat; keep warm.

4. To serve, allow each person to assemble burrito as desired, using a warm flour tortilla, zucchini, bean mixture, cheese and cilantro leaves. Pass salsa to serve with burritos.

Carrot Salad

This tasty salad is ready in just 10 minutes.

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro leaves
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper
2 packages (8 ounces each) shredded carrots

1. In large bowl, with wire whisk or fork, mix lime juice, honey, cilantro, salt and crushed red pepper until blended.

2. Toss carrots with lime dressing to coat.

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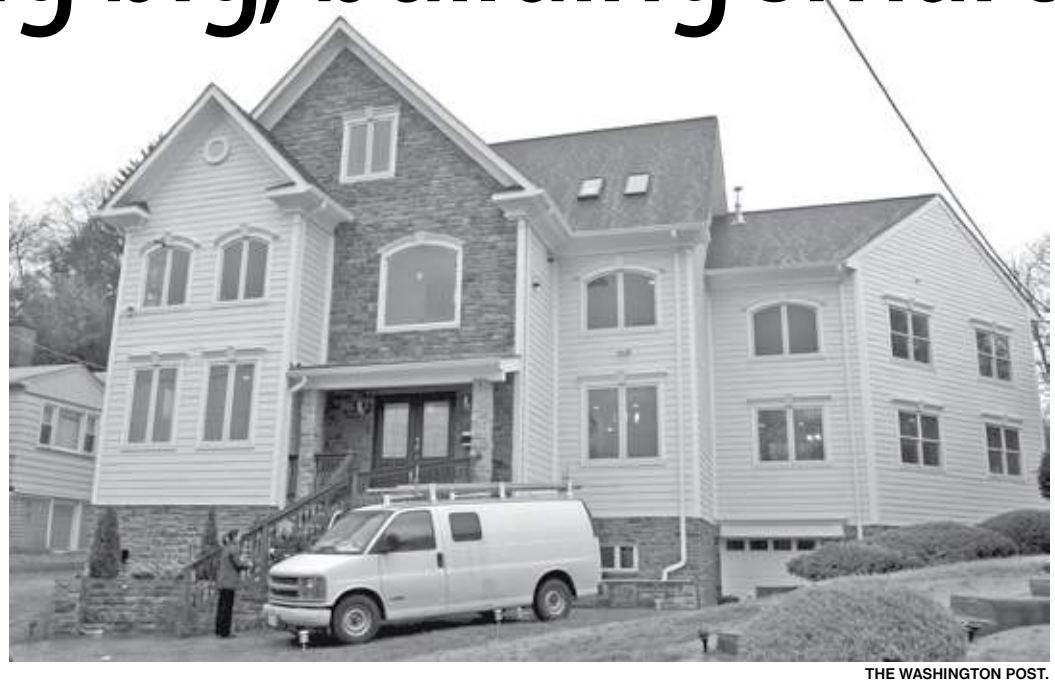
Building big, building smart

By DINA ELBOGHDADY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST



THE WASHINGTON POST.
The 6,500-square-foot house that Jerry Zayets, owner of Nexxt Builders, has constructed in Washington uses energy-efficient products, from spray-in ceiling insulation to triple pane windows to flooring made of swift-growing bamboo.

WASHINGTON—The house Joe Monfredo built in Davidsonville, Md., has seven bedrooms, 6 1/2 baths and four fireplaces. The home is almost five times the size of the average new American house.

And it's good for the planet, Monfredo claims.

The two concepts of "green" and "big" hardly seem compatible. After all, green is synonymous with conservation. Big is closely linked with waste. Yet some eco-friendly homes these days are not just big, they're huge, and the relationship between size and greenness is not as clear-cut as one might think.

All else being equal, a small home is more eco-friendly than a big one. It eats up less in raw materials, emits less greenhouse gas and is more energy-efficient simply because it's smaller.

But who is to judge how much space a person needs, asked David Goldstein, energy program director at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group based in New York. If one 10,000-square-foot house owned by a family of four is "a bad thing," what about two 5,000-square-foot houses owned by the same family?

"It's really a matter of moral or economic judgment as to whether the home you're asking for makes environmental sense," Goldstein said. "Only the individual homeowner is in a position to know how much size satisfies basic needs, how much satisfies basic wants and how much is silly extravagance."

For decades, Americans have believed that bigger is better. The average size of a new home swelled by two-thirds from 1970 to 2007, from 1,500 to 2,500 square feet, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). The "supersize me" phenomenon unfolded even as the average family size shrank, suggesting that people are buying bigger for lifestyle reasons, not function.

The way builder Jerry Zayets sees it, the desire to go green has not diminished that craving for space.

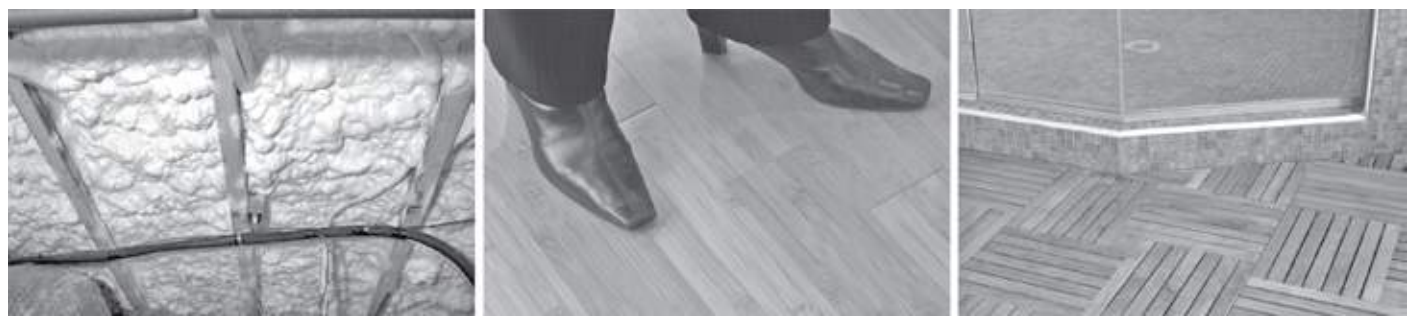
That's why he built a 6,500-square-foot house in Washington, now on the market for $1.59 million. With seven bedrooms, six baths and a dramatic two-story entry, the house feels vast.

"I know people walk into this house and think it's the Ford Excursion of homes," said Zayets, owner of Nexxt Builders in Washington. "It's not. The energy costs of this home are less than my 1,200-square-foot rambler ... . Many small homes consume more energy than the one I've built."

The key is the envelope of the house, Zayets said. Each surface that touches the outside is insulated with a low-density foam that sprays on like a cream but expands to 100 times its size, seals air leaks and takes the shape of whatever space it's filling, he said. Traditional fiberglass insulation must be cut with a utility knife, making it tough to use for irregular angles and crevices.

The house qualifies as energy-efficient under the federally run Energy Star program. Generally, Energy Star homes are at least 15 percent more efficient than homes built to 2004 building codes. Each has to meet baseline energy requirements that are then tested and inspected by an independent contractor.

The contractor who inspected Zayets' house concluded that the energy savings would total $2,150 a year compared with a house of a similar size built to 2004 code, which is similar to current building standards, Zayets said.



THE WASHINGTON POST
The key to home energy efficiency is its envelope. In this Washington house, the ceiling insulation (left) is a spray-on material that expands to 100 times its size, sealing air leaks. Center, bamboo flooring is a green alternative; oak takes decades to mature, but bamboo renews itself in seven years. Right, a bathroom with teak wood that is recycled and has natural oils that prevent rotting.

GREENER PATHWAYS

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

■ Change the light bulbs. Use compact fluorescent lighting instead of incandescent bulbs in areas that are lit for two hours or longer. They are five times as efficient and last up to 10 times longer. But they burn out quickly if switched on and off frequently. They're also more expensive, $4 to $15 a pop, depending on their type.

■ Install a programmable thermostat. It automatically adjusts the home's temperature to match your schedule. The units cost $40 to $100 and offer 10 to 15 percent in savings.

■ Seal air leaks. Caulk or weatherstrip cracks that let in outside air, then add insulation. A heating and cooling contractor should check the home's airtightness and perform a combustion safety test to make sure the gas- or oil-burning appliances are working properly.

■ Use energy-efficient appliances. Federally rated Energy Star appliances are designed to use 10 to 50 percent less energy and water than standard appliances. Focus on refrigerators, because they run constantly. Replacing a fridge that's 10 years old with a newer, more energy-efficient model could cut your annual energy bill by $100.

■ Landscape properly. Deciduous trees on the west and south sides of a house help shade it during the summer. Hedges and trees on the north side block wind in the winter. Plus, one tree can filter 60 pounds of pollutants from the air each year.

■ Recycle. Use materials that are renewable, contain recycled products, or can be easily dismantled and reused. Cut down on transportation costs by buying locally.

■ Work with qualified professionals. Go to www.energystar.gov and click on "Find an Energy Star Builder" in the New Homes section. Or click on the LEED-Accredited Professional Directory at www.gbci.org; plug in a state. Next month, the National Association of Home Builders will offer a national registry of green builders at www.nahbgreen.org.

■ Do more research. Figure out your family's greenhouse gas emissions using the EPA's calculator at www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind(underline)calculator.html. Get personalized home improvement tips at www.energystar.gov or www.rehabadvisor.com.

Sources: National Association of Home Builders, Environmental Protection Agency, Kelly Lerner (co-author of "Natural Remodeling for the Not-So-Green House")

The Good Life

Ach, it's sit and deliver for women's coach

By ABIGAIL TUCKER
(C) 2008, THE BALTIMORE SUN

BALTIMORE—Some of the girls huddled in this dark corner have biceps like billiard balls and tattoos up their spines, and none is used to sitting still.

"Where is Coach B?" a 6-foot-tall someone hisses. There are heavy footsteps in the hall, and before long a bulging belly rounds the bend.

"Surprise!" The Terps explode out of their hiding place and into the Comcast Center reception room filled with presents, boxes of Pampers and a cake iced with a stork.

For a moment, Coach Brenda Frese looks startled enough to go into labor right there. Then she's grinning so widely that you hardly notice the dark circles under her eyes—a byproduct of trying to deliver twins and a national championship all in the same basketball season.

"OK, OK, you guys got me," she says to the baby shower crowd: cheering players, trainers and assistants, and a small army of team managers, one of whom has brought along her father, an obstetrician, just in case. "How did nobody slip up on this?"

She sinks into a black upholstered office chair, which has been wheeled in for the occasion.

Emblazoned with a Maryland M and equipped with a round pillow to support the base of her back, the chair has been her roost for several months, since a bulging disc and pregnancy weight—50-plus pounds by January—began to make pacing the court a painful chore, rather than the rush it had always been.

She'll work from it as long as possible until the babies are born, likely in late February or early March—the height of tournament madness, when the team hopes to be on track to duplicate its 2006 national title.

During practice, the 37-year-old coach rolls along the sidelines; at games, her chair is in the heart of the huddle.

For now, it's festooned with pastel balloons, the center of the action as Frese opens gift after gift: plush toys, her players' favorite children's books and a baby hoops set with a basketball no bigger than a kumquat.

But in two days, Jan. 14, she will be sitting courtside again—no longer behaving as a first-time mother-to-be, but rather as a sixth-season Maryland head coach aiming to take down Duke.

"Just not tonight, Brenda! Not tonight!"

Frese smiles politely at the shouting Maryland fan in the bleachers, who, like others in the hour or so before the Duke game, is offering his opinion on the twins' ideal delivery date. Others want to weigh in on their gender, although Frese long ago decided this would remain secret, even to her, until the day they are born.

The 17,950-capacity Comcast Center is filling up fast. It could be a sellout crowd; the team is 19-1 at this point, and Frese's in-season pregnancy, almost unheard-of in elite college coaching circles, has drawn plenty of attention. As she waits for pregame interviews, gallant security guards assess her full moon of a stomach and offer up their seats.

"When's your due date?" a campus policewoman asks as Frese is fitted with a microphone.

March 11, she replies.

"You'll never get that far with twins!" the woman chortles. "Trust me, it'll be a relief."

Frese sure hopes so. As much as she wants to carry her babies to term, she would also like her body back.

Double pregnancy is difficult for anyone, but particularly for a person used to working out six days a week, a former standout college athlete whose job is to transform young women into formidable competitors.

Now the locker room air is hot and crackly, like weather before a thunderstorm. All eyes are on Frese as she talks up the offensive strategy: When you get catches in the paint, rip it through. Be strong with the basketball.

She takes a deep breath:

"Understand that every play you make is the energy and the electricity. Feed off the crowd!"

"Here we go, ladies!" someone shouts. "Champions on three!"

"One-two-three-CHAMPIONS!"

THE BALTIMORE SUN

Maryland women's head coach Brenda Frese, due to deliver twins next month, coaches her team from an office chair equipped with a supportive pillow.

The team storms the court, Frese follows slowly into the now-roaring stadium, beelining for her black chair on the sideline. Duke coach Joanne P. McCallie comes over to shake hands, wearing the kind of crisp suit Frese wishes she could still fit into.

Talking with Frese, McCallie, herself a mother, touches her own belly sympathetically—a rare moment of tenderness between two generals.

Frese's coaching career is a long list of triumphs. She excelled in positions at less powerful programs, coming to Maryland in April 2002 already licking her chops for the national championship; in 2006, it was hers. She took her players to the NCAA tournament four consecutive times and last year landed the team's only No. 1 preseason ranking.

Yet she sometimes doubted she could have what seemed to come easily to so many women: a family.

In the whirlwind of the college basketball calendar there is no good time to have a child, which is perhaps why so few female Division I coaches ever do. Practices start in October and, if all goes well, the NCAA tournament wraps up in April. The rest of the year is consumed by camps and recruiting trips to gyms across the country, to lay the foundation for the team's future.

By the time Maryland came calling, her first marriage was over, done in by the stress of her grueling schedule and endless travel. Although College Park quickly felt like home to her, and the team and support staff functioned very much like a family, she says she longed for a husband and children.

Her own mother had raised six kids while holding down two jobs; Frese wished she, too, could achieve that balance.

Then she met Mark Thomas, a producer for the coach's show, "Under the Shell." Not only was Thomas a rabid Terps fan, deeply kind and tall enough to date a leggy ex-basketball star, but, she discovered as they fell in love, marrying in 2005, he was game to take on child-rearing responsibilities to make parenthood possible for them both.

This fall, her players guessed what was up before she told them. An assistant coach had gotten pregnant a few years back, and the girls believed they knew the signs. Coach B's clothes "fit weird," they said. At the August team meeting when she first flashed pictures of their two new "verbal commitments"—sonogram images of the twins—the team smacked ecstatic high-fives.

It took a moment for the due date to sink in. "March?" The players said, bewildered. "That's tournament time!"

Frese vowed to be there as much as she could during the season. But by mid-October, her back hurt so badly that she could barely climb stairs, and she turned over practices, and some game duties, to assistant Daron Park. She missed several away games in the fall because of illness or distance; she was terrified of ending up on bed rest or, worse, having premature babies in a far-off intensive care unit. Telling the team that she wouldn't be able to go with them to California at Thanksgiving, she nearly cried.

These decisions were heart-breaking for a coach who had never missed a game in her six years at Maryland, and they only got harder. Consulting with her doctor before the Wake Forest game in early January, she decided that she could no longer risk traveling at all.

The players, for their part, seemed to take the news in stride. They had decided that playing 14 games in 31 days, as they did earlier in the season, was nothing compared with carrying twins.

Four days after the Duke game, Frese spreads a blanket over her lap and settles onto the basement couch of her Laurel home, as if preparing to watch a Lifetime movie special instead of a vicious contest against the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. She palms her big belly as Thomas fiddles with the channels. At least they can view this match on cable, instead of squinting at a blurry streaming video off the Web.

Whether at home or courtside, she's making an effort to watch more calmly these days, eliminating sudden movements, although sometimes she can't contain herself.

Thomas finds the right channel just before the tip-off. The game doesn't start well, with starters missing shots and committing early fouls. Frese tries not to react, although occasionally she draws in a sharp breath that sounds like something straight out of Lamaze class.

She resists calling her assistants with midgame advice, leaving her staff to do its work. But more than a hundred miles away, she maintains a coach's umbilical awareness of her players; when post Crystal Langhorne sinks her third basket, Frese knows immediately that she has finally done it—surpassed Maryland's all-time leading women's scorer.

"Got the record," Frese whispers softly.

At halftime, the Terrapins are trailing 34-33. Frese says she wishes she could be in the locker room with them. Instead, she steps out for what seems like her millionth bathroom break of the day.

The score stays close until there are less than six minutes left, and freshman Marah Strickland deposits a three-pointer; soon afterward, guard Kristi Toliver follows suit. The Virginia coach roars like a wounded lion. Maryland has wedged open a decent lead.

With seconds left in the game, Thomas leans over and plants a kiss on his wife.

"The kiss of relief," he says.

Her night won't end here, though. She'll stay up until she hears from the team, then mull over some Georgia Tech footage before bed.

Many of Frese's players intend to be mothers themselves one day. They can't agree, however, on whether boys or girls are preferable.

Marissa Coleman, a combination guard-forward, says she hopes only for sons. What if a daughter wanted to be a cheerleader or, more horrible, a ballerina? As a child, Coleman could never stand recitals and dressing up.

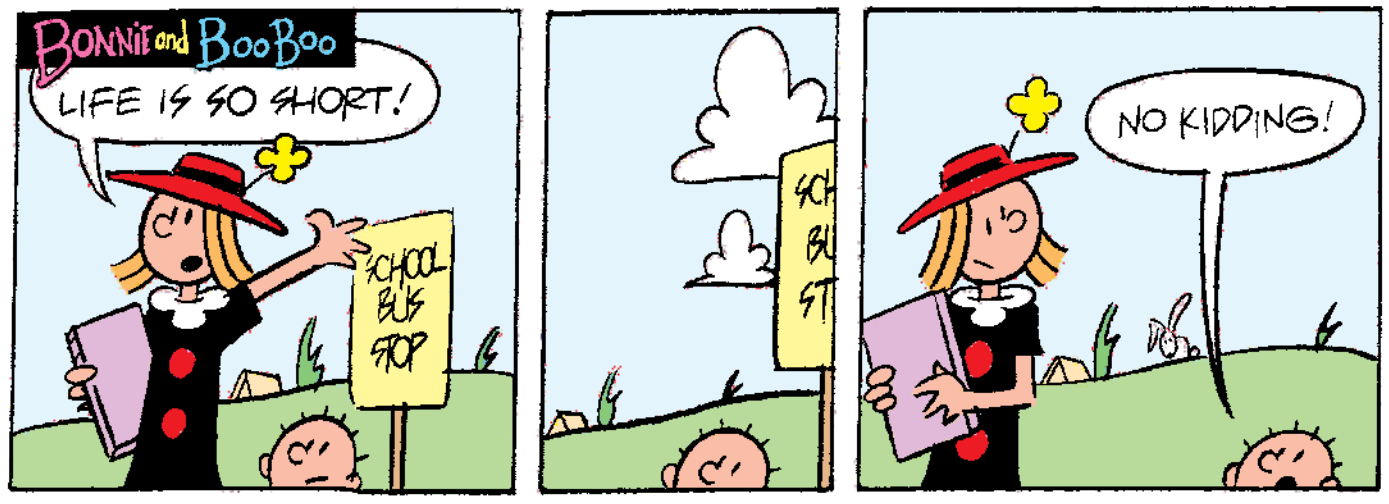
"I went to one Girl Scout meeting, and that was all," she said. "There was no adventure in it."

But Frese is keeping an open mind: She likes a few surprises in her hyperscheduled life and believes that both sexes come with their particular joys and sorrows—some of which she's learning a lot more about as she fights through her third trimester. Besides, as any recruiter understands, you can't overestimate the value of a person's spirit.

All this suspense has sometimes confounded team members and friends, who don't know whether to shop for pale pink or powder blue.

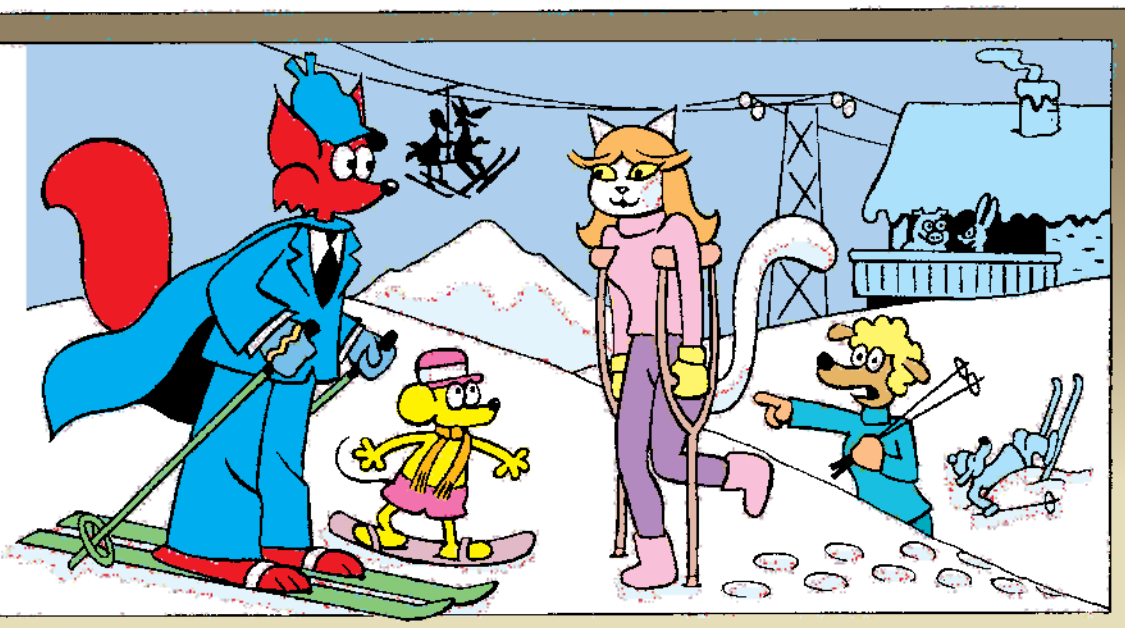
But Maryland red is always a safe bet.

Bob Weber Jr.'s Slylock Fox and Comics for Kids

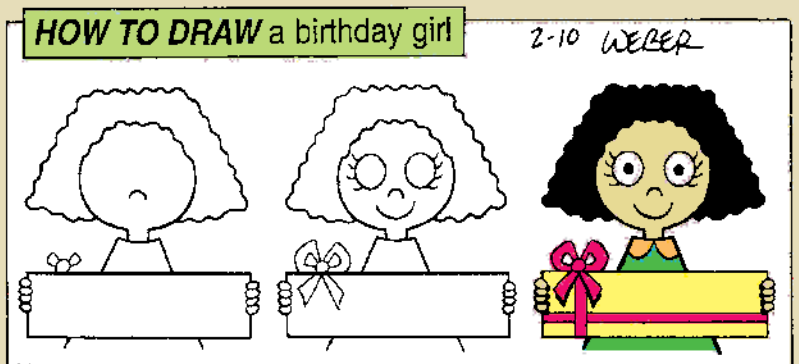


Someone broke into Slylock Fox's lodge room and stole his ski lift ticket. A witness reports seeing Cassandra Cat running from Slylock's room a short while ago. Cassandra claims she twisted her ankle yesterday and is incapable of running. Why doesn't Slylock Fox believe Cassandra's alibi?

Solution -- Notice the normal walking footprints and no crutch prints in the snow behind Cassandra. She only pretended to use crutches when Slylock confronted her.



HOW TO DRAW a birthday girl



More *HOW TO DRAW* cartoons at www.kidcartoonists.com

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YOUR DRAWING

Today's artist is Joe Mann, age 12, of Tampa, FL

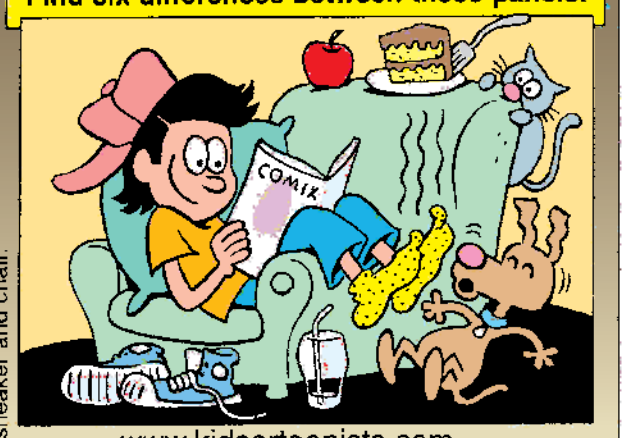
You can submit your art online at **www.kidcartoonists.com**

The scrambled words are comic book superheroes. How many can you unscramble?

a) ANUSRMPE
b) AMUANQA
c) NABTAM
d) ELIWEVRNO

Answer -- a) Superman b) Aquaman c) Batman d) Wolverine

Find six differences between these panels.



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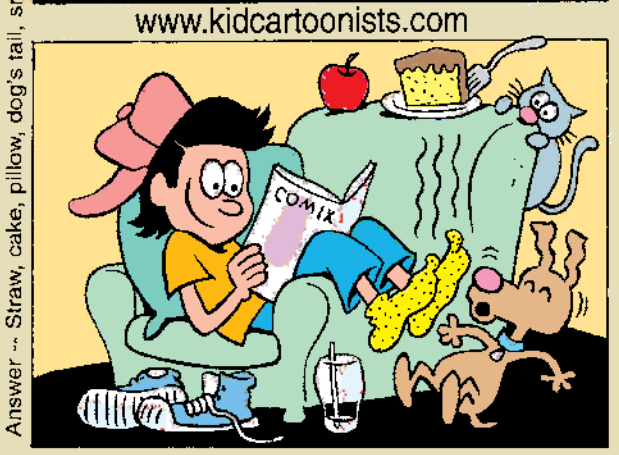
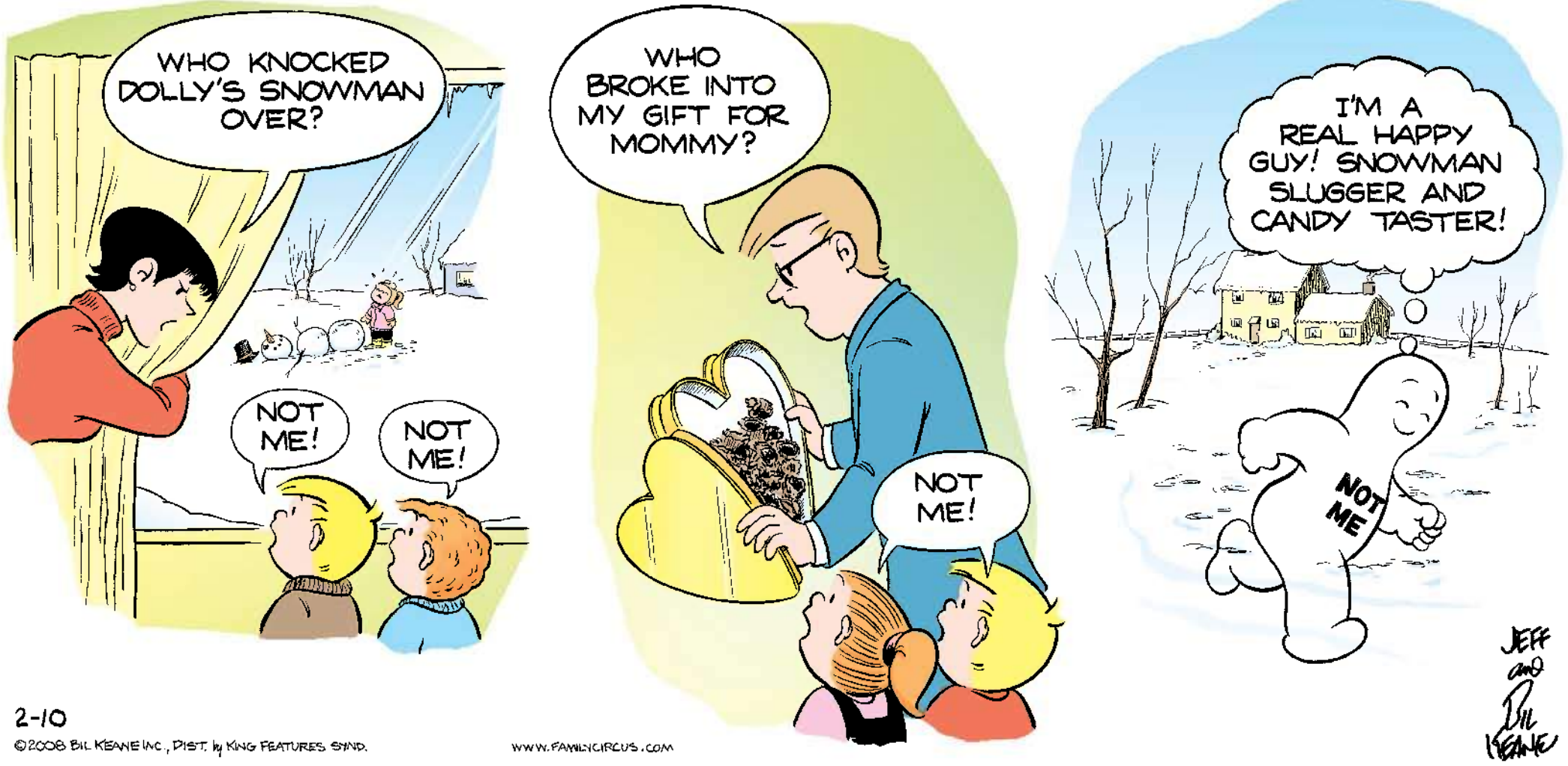


Answer -- Straw, cake, pillow, dog's tail, sneaker and chair.

New! The fourth **Find the six differences** collection is here. Send $4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to **Six Differences No. 4**, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

By Bil Keane


WHO KNOCKED DOLLY'S SNOWMAN OVER?
NOT ME!
NOT ME!
WHO BROKE INTO MY GIFT FOR MOMMY?
NOT ME!
I'M A REAL HAPPY GUY! SNOWMAN SLUGGER AND CANDY TASTER!
NOT ME
JEFF and Bil KEANE

2-10

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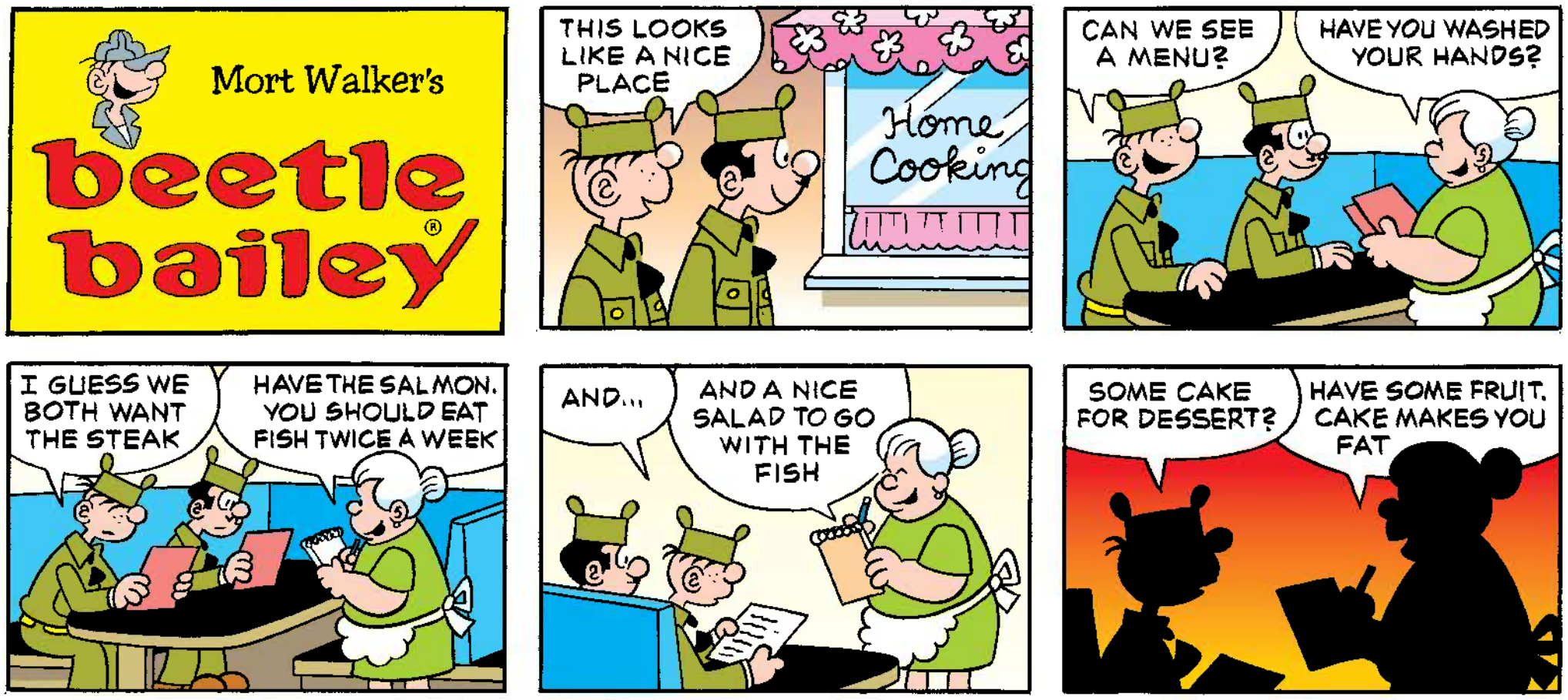
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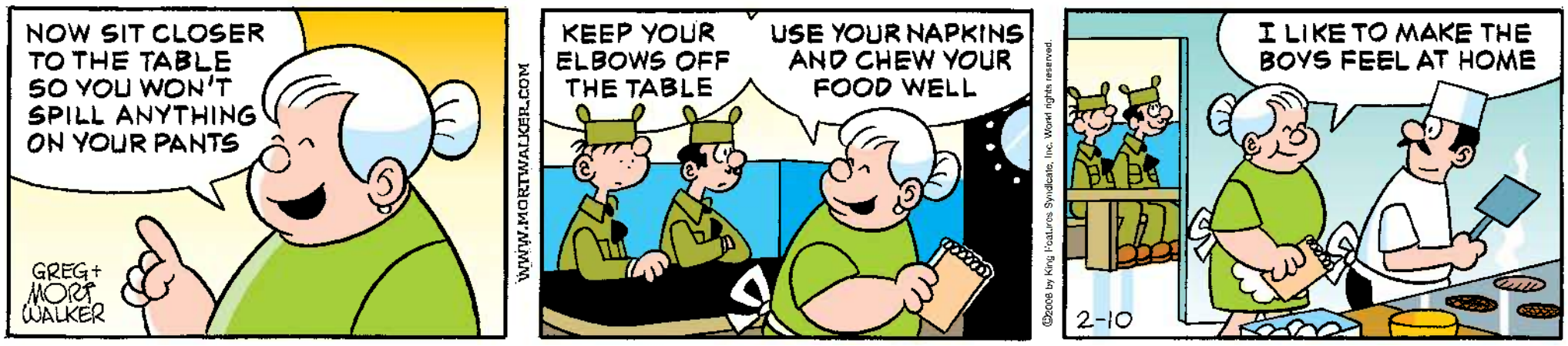
beetle bailey®
THIS LOOKS LIKE A NICE PLACE
Home Cooking
CAN WE SEE A MENU?
HAVE YOU WASHED YOUR HANDS?
I GUESS WE BOTH WANT THE STEAK
HAVE THE SALMON. YOU SHOULD EAT FISH TWICE A WEEK
AND...
AND A NICE SALAD TO GO WITH THE FISH
SOME CAKE FOR DESSERT?
HAVE SOME FRUIT. CAKE MAKES YOU FAT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I LIKE TO MAKE THE BOYS FEEL AT HOME
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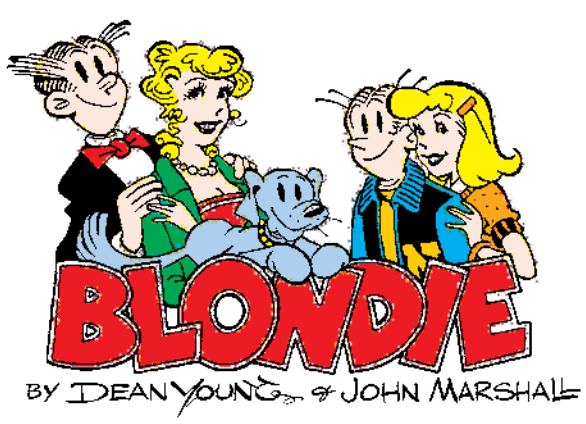
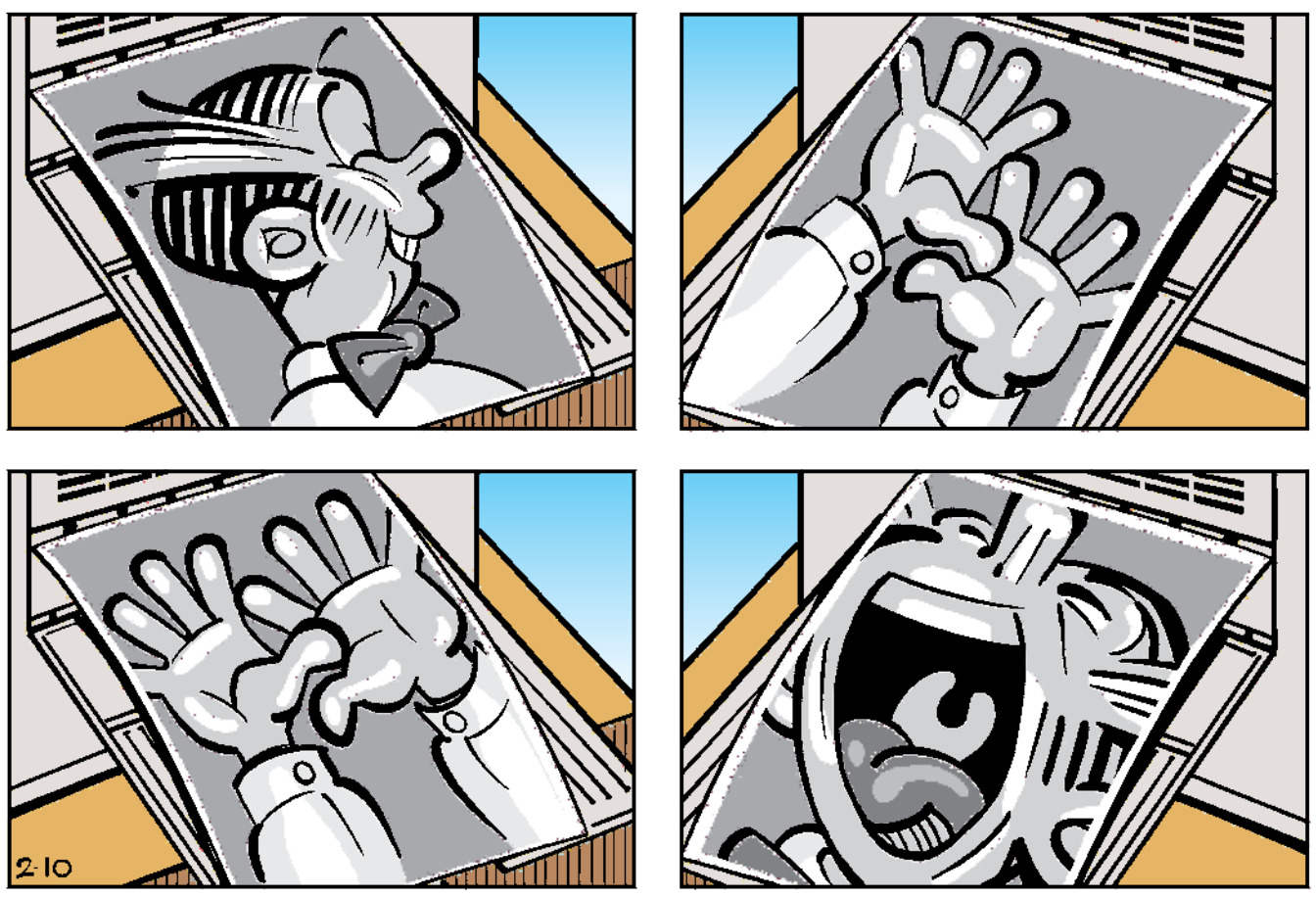

BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL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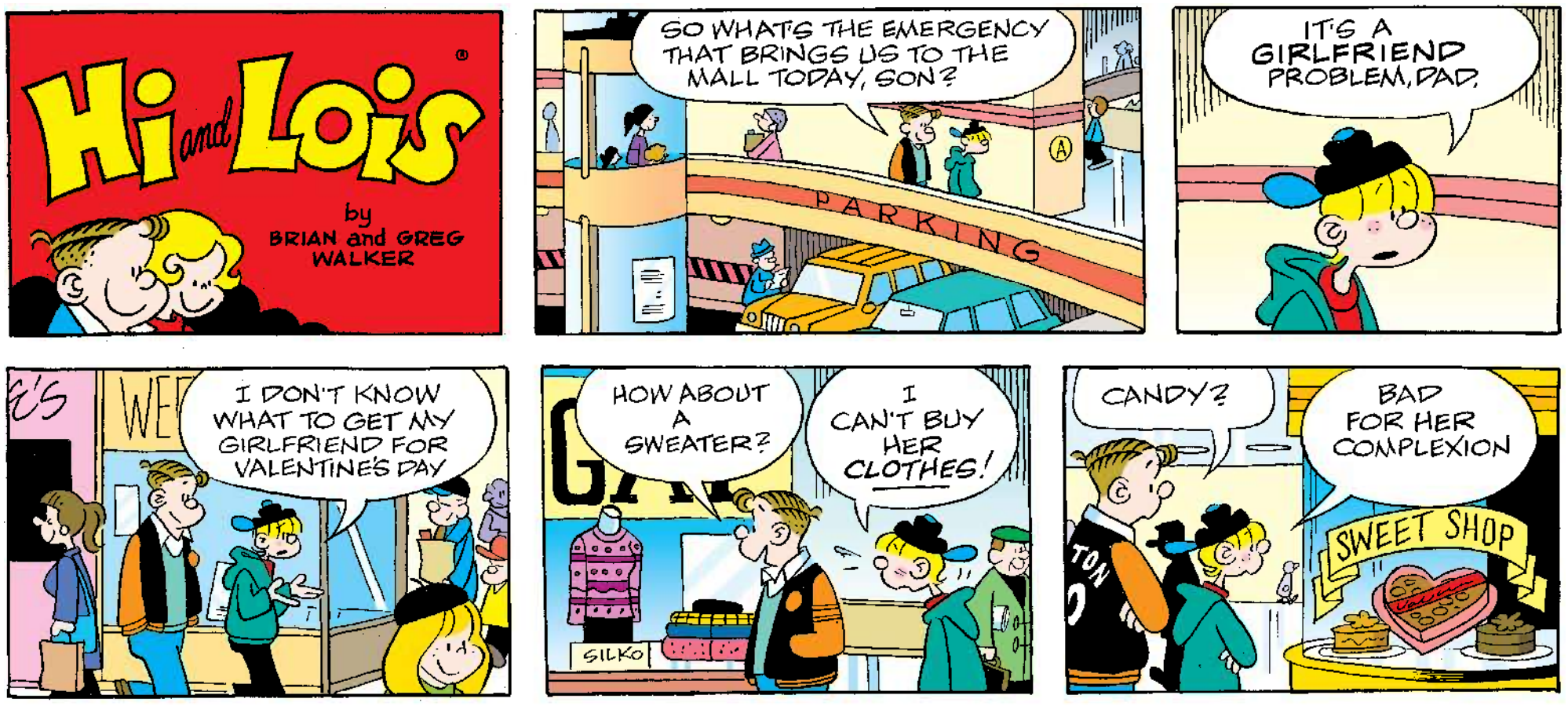
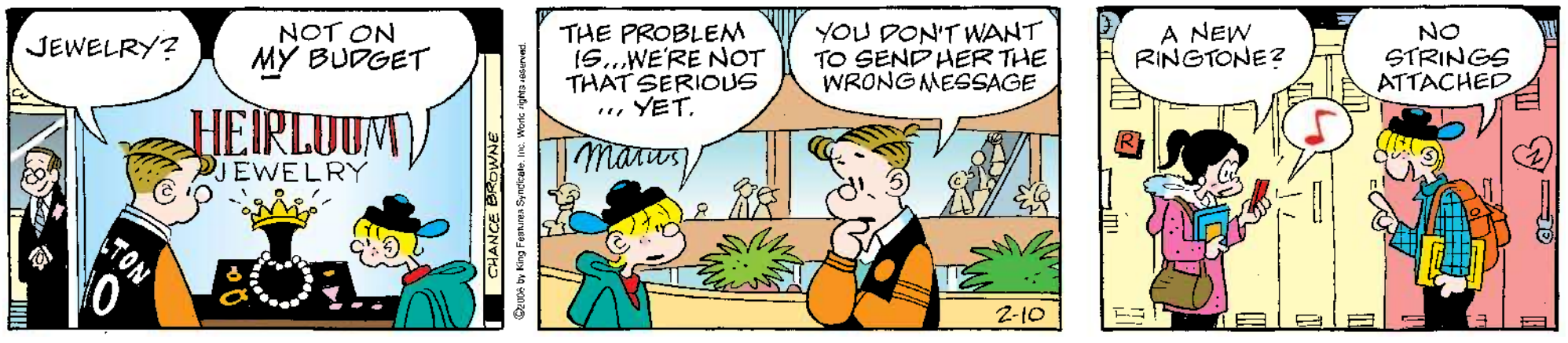
DAGWOOD, WHAT'S THE MATTER?!
THE BOSS SAID I'M NOT ALLOWED TO USE OUR NEW COPY MACHINE WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION!


Hi and Lois
by
BRIAN and GREG WALKER
SO WHAT'S THE EMERGENCY THAT BRINGS US TO THE MALL TODAY, SON?
PARKING
A
IT'S A GIRLFRIEND PROBLEM, DAD.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO GET MY GIRLFRIEND FOR VALENTINE'S DAY
HOW ABOUT A SWEATER?
I CAN'T BUY HER CLOTHES!
SILKO
CANDY?
BAD FOR HER COMPLEXION
SWEET SHOP


JEWELRY?
NOT ON MY BUDGET
HEIRLOOM JEWELRY
CHANCE BROWNE
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THE PROBLEM IS...WE'RE NOT THAT SERIOUS ... YET.
YOU DON'T WANT TO SEND HER THE WRONG MESSAGE
Marcus
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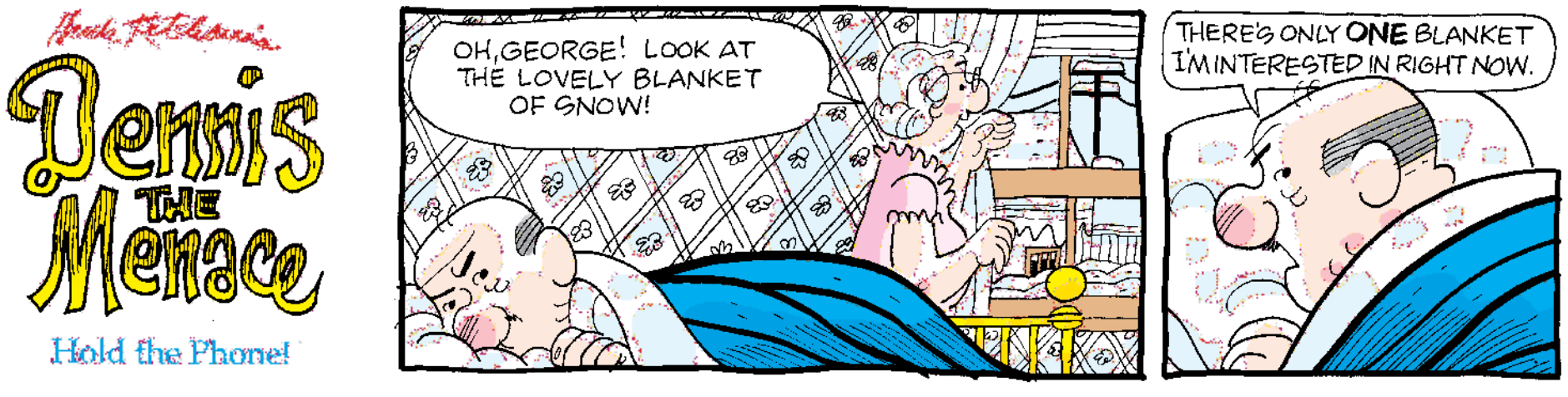
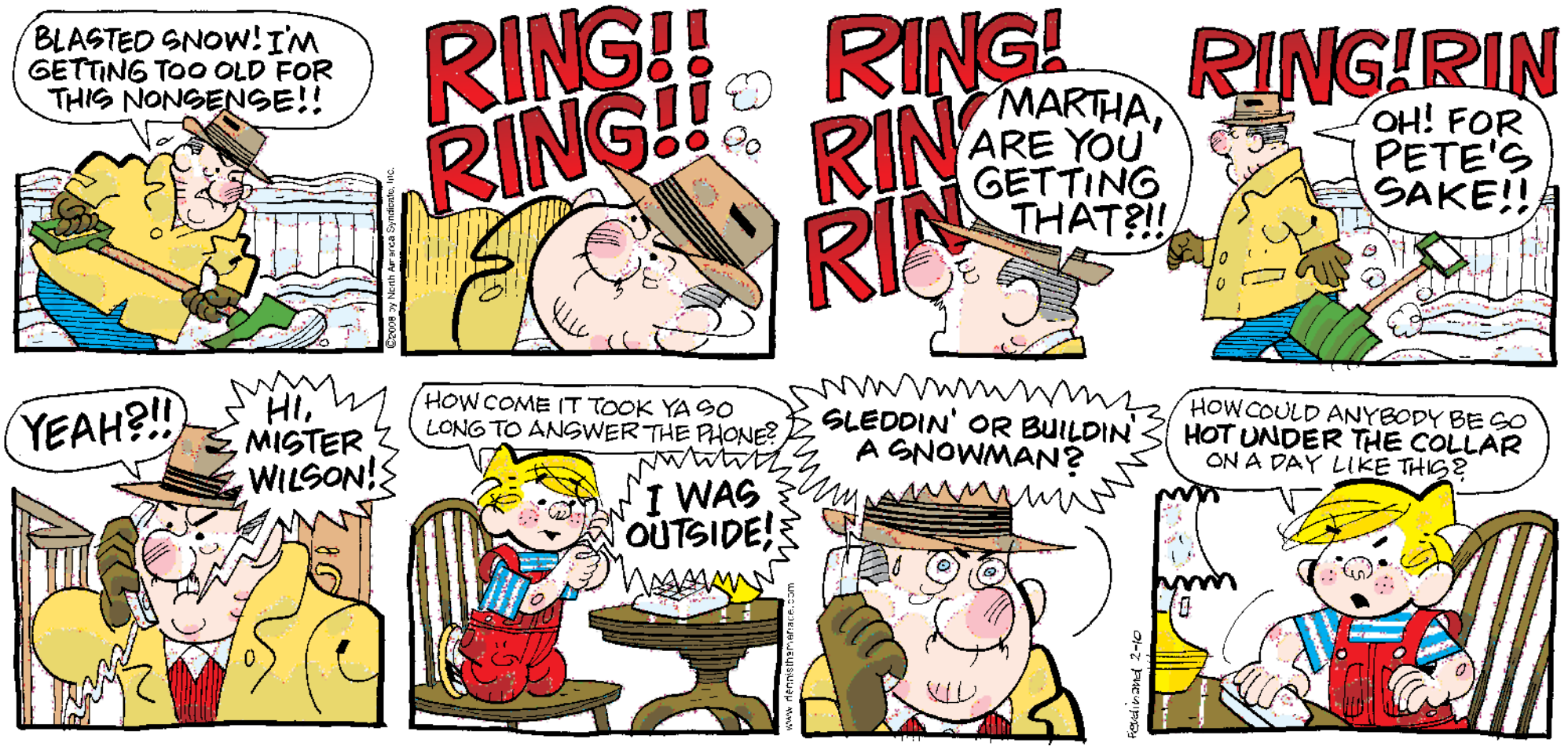
A NEW RINGTONE?
NO STRINGS ATTACHED


Hank Ketcham's
Dennis the Menace
Hold the Phone!
OH, GEORGE! LOOK AT THE LOVELY BLANKET OF SNOW!
THERE'S ONLY ONE BLANKET I'M INTERESTED IN RIGHT NOW.


BLASTED SNOW! I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS NONSENSE!!
RING!! RING!!
©2008 by North America Syndicate, Inc.
RING! RIN
MARTHA, ARE YOU GETTING THAT?!!
RING! RIN
OH! FOR PETE'S SAKE!!
YEAH?!!
HI, MISTER WILSON!
HOW COME IT TOOK YA SO LONG TO ANSWER THE PHONE?
I WAS OUTSIDE!
www.dennisthemenace.com
SLEDDIN' OR BUILDIN' A SNOWMAN?
HOW COULD ANYBODY BE SO HOT UNDER THE COLLAR ON A DAY LIKE THIS?
Fgraduated 2-10

Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You might feel bolder as each new success falls into place. But caution is still advised through the end of the week. Until then, a step-by-step approach is best.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) That cooperation you request could come at too high a price. Since few can beat the Bovine at being clever and resourceful, why not see what you can do on your own?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Aspects favor a quieter time spent getting closer to the people who are especially important to you. There's always much more to learn and appreciate about each other.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) The concerned Crab will act to resolve workplace misunderstandings before they get out of hand and cause more-serious problems. Co-workers rally to support your efforts.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) What the Big Cat might see as a disturbing act of disloyalty might just be a failure of communication on both sides. Take time for mediation rather than confrontation.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Be more patient with those who seem unwilling to accept your version of what's right. The fact is, there's a lot more to learn on all sides of this issue.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) It should be easier to assess the facts you'll need to make an important decision. But don't commit if you still have doubts. There could be more you need to know.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Your excitement level remains high as you continue working on that new project. Expect some setbacks. But on the whole, all will move pretty much on schedule.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) It might be wise to be more prudent with expenses right now. But your financial situation should soon clear up, and you could be back shopping, happily as ever.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) You might prefer sticking with your current schedule. But some newly emerging information could persuade you to consider a change. Keep an open mind.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) You might want to reject a suggested change. But it could be wise to go with the flow, at least for a while. You can always return to your first plan if you like.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You're bolstered by both the practical and poetic sides of your nature as you maneuver through some unsettled emotional situations. Things ease up by week's end.

BORN THIS WEEK: People reach out to your generosity and wisdom, and consider you a treasured and trusted friend.

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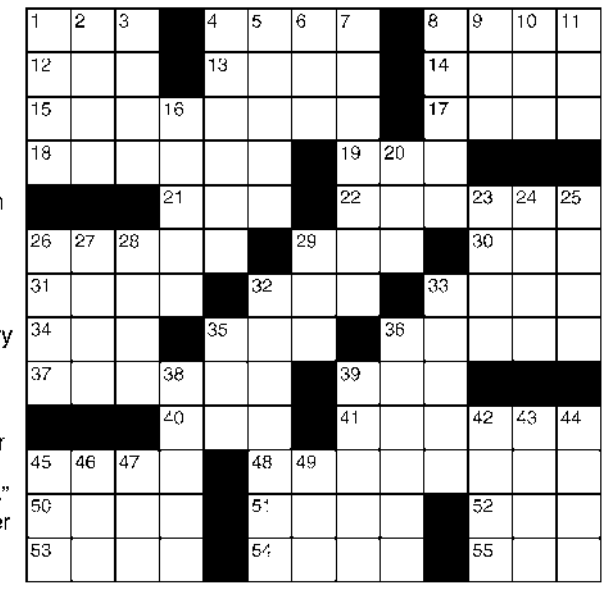
King Crossword



ACROSS
1 Picnic invader
4 Move spirally
8 Italy's silhouette
12 Tarzan's son
13 Bound
14 Gifford's successor
15 Seles contemporary
17 As well
18 Growths of bamboo
19 Neutral color
21 Perform
22 "Dream-girls" Oscar winner
26 Keep tabs on
29 Gender
30 Lamb's dam
31 "Be still"
32 Tool set
33 Encounter
34 Savings-plan acronym
35 Send immediately
36 They get in the whey
37 "Alias" star
39 U.K. fliers
40 McKinley's first lady
41 Under the wire
45 Tar's bars?
48 First name of 15-, 22-, and 37- Across
50 "That hurts!"
51 Jason's ship
52 To and —
53 Help a hood
54 Fit snugly inside
55 "Absolutely"

DOWN
1 Basic learning
2 Ham's dad
3 Proof-reader's find
4 Minor problem
5 Leavening agent
6 Snitch
7 Disparaging word
8 Maverick's lack
9 Tin Man's need
10 Photo —
11 Confucian principle
16 Insect
20 "La Cage — Folles"
23 Prognosticator
24 Due
25 Trawler equipment
26 Henry Clay or Daniel Webster
27 Emanation
28 Despot
29 Touchdown score
32 Maestro
33 Herbert von — Soldier's civvies
35 Nourished
36 Lacks the ability
38 Dark period
39 Fifth day Christmas gift
42 Dubious
43 Unembellished
44 Cupid's alter ego
45 Slithery squeezer
46 Difficulty
47 "Rocks"
49 Before

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top ten

Valentine's Day Movies

1. *Casablanca*
2. *Sabrina*
3. *When Harry Met Sally*
4. *Gone with the Wind*
5. *Titanic*
6. *An Affair to Remember*
7. *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)
8. *Sleepless in Seattle*
9. *Pretty Woman*
10. *Love Story*

Source: Hollywood.com

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KING CROSSWORD LAST SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

B	U	R	G	S	■	P	O	W	■	O	R	E
O	P	A	R	T	■	A	P	E	■	S	E	X
O	S	T	I	A	■	R	A	T	R	A	C	E
■	■	A	N	I	M	A	L	■	A	G	A	R
A	N	T	■	N	O	D	■	A	D	E	P	T
D	E	A	D	■	V	E	R	D	I	■	■	■
D	O	T	A	G	E	■	A	Z	U	R	E	S
■	■	■	M	A	R	E	S	■	M	U	T	T
G	O	T	A	T	■	L	P	S	■	G	A	Y
A	R	E	S	■	M	A	S	H	E	R	■	■
P	A	C	K	R	A	T	■	E	R	A	S	E
E	T	H	■	I	C	E	■	A	N	T	E	D
D	E	S	■	B	E	D	■	R	O	S	E	S

United States

MSNBC anchor's Chelsea comment angers Clinton

SEATTLE (AP)—A distasteful comment about Chelsea Clinton by an MSNBC anchor could imperil Hillary Rodham Clinton's participation in future presidential debates on the network, a Clinton spokesman said.

In a conference call with reporters, Clinton communications director Howard Wolfson on Friday excoriated MSNBC's David Shuster for suggesting the Clinton campaign had "pimped out" 27-year old Chelsea by having her place phone calls to celebrities and Democratic Party "superdelegates" on her mother's behalf.

Clinton

Wolfson called Shuster's comment "beneath contempt" and disgusting.

"I, at this point, can't envision a scenario where we would continue to engage in debates on that network," he added.

MSNBC said Shuster, who apologized on the air for his comment, has been temporarily suspended from appearing on all NBC news broadcasts except to offer his apology.

"NBC News takes these matters seriously, and offers our sincere regrets to the Clintons for the remarks," MSNBC spokesman Jeremy Gaines said, adding the network was hopeful the debate would take place as planned.

Clinton and Obama are scheduled to participate in an MSNBC debate Feb. 26 from Ohio, which holds its primary March 4. The Clinton campaign has pushed hard for as many debates as possible with Obama, but Wolfson said the Feb. 26 debate could be jeopardized.

Wolfson pointed to what he called a pattern of tasteless comments by MSNBC anchors about the Clinton campaign. Weeks ago, "Hardball" host Chris Matthews apologized to the former first lady after suggesting her political career had been made possible by her husband's philandering.

Obama leads Clinton by only 2 delegates

WASHINGTON (AP)—Three days after the voting ended, the race for Democratic delegates in Super Tuesday's contests was still too close to call. With nearly 1,600 delegates from Tuesday contests awarded, Sen. Barack Obama led by two delegates Friday night, with 91 delegates still to be awarded. Obama won 796 delegates in Tuesday's contests, to 794 for Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, according to an analysis of voting results by The Associated Press.

In the Republican contest, Sen. John McCain had a commanding lead in the race for delegates.

Nearly a third of the outstanding delegates are from Colorado, a state where Obama won the popular vote. California, a state that Clinton carried, had 20 Democratic delegates still to be awarded. Neither state expected to have complete results before next week.

Obama won the popular vote in 13 states Tuesday, while Clinton won in eight states and American Samoa.

In the overall race for the nomination, Clinton has 1,055 delegates, including separately chosen party and elected officials known as superdelegates. Obama has 998.

A total of 2,025 delegates are need to secure the Democratic nomination.

Many delegates were outstanding because some states have been unable to provide all the votes in some congressional districts. The problems arose in states with counties that are split into multiple congressional districts.

The states have provided results in each county. But in some cases, they are still working to assign the votes in the appropriate congressional district.

Those votes are important because both parties award delegates based on statewide votes and on results in individual congressional districts. Democrats award them proportionally, meaning precise counts can be necessary, even when the vote is overwhelmingly in favor of one candidate.

In California, officials were still counting absentee ballots Friday. Officials had estimated that more than 1 million absentee ballots may have been submitted.

AP

Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., greets the crowd as he begins a rally Friday, Feb. 8, 2008, at KeyArena in Seattle. Washington state voters will take part in political caucuses on Saturday.

Tooth scan reveals Neanderthal mobility

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Analysis of a 40,000-year-old tooth found in southern Greece suggests Neanderthals were more mobile than once thought, paleontologists said Friday.

Analysis of the tooth - part of the first and only Neanderthal remains found in Greece - showed the ancient human had spent at least part of its life away from the area where it died.

"Neanderthal mobility is highly controversial," said paleoanthropologist Katerina Harvati at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany.

Some experts believe Neanderthals roamed over very limited areas, but others say they must have been more mobile, particularly when hunting, Harvati said.

Until now, experts only had indirect evidence, including stone used in tools, Harvati said. "Our analysis is the first that brings evidence from a Neanderthal fossil itself," she said.

The findings by the Max Planck Institute team were published in the Journal of Archaeological Science.

The tooth was found in a seaside excavation in Greece's southern Peloponnese region in 2002.

The team analyzed tooth enamel for ratios of a strontium isotope, a naturally occurring metal found in food and water. Levels of the metal vary in different areas.

AP

A 40,000-year-old tooth is seen in this undated hand out photo released by Greek Culture Ministry.

FDA links anti-wrinkle drugs to botulism deaths

WASHINGTON (AP)—The popular anti-wrinkle drug Botox and a competitor have been linked to dangerous botulism symptoms in some users, cases so bad that a few children given the drugs for muscle spasms have died, the government warned Friday.

The Food and Drug Administration's warning includes both Botox, a wrinkle-specific version called Botox Cosmetic, and its competitor, Myobloc, drugs that all use botulinum toxin to block nerve impulses, causing them to relax.

In rare cases, the toxin can spread beyond the injection site to other parts of the body, paralyzing or weakening the muscles used for breathing and swallowing, a potentially fatal side effect, the FDA said.

Botox is best known for minimizing wrinkles by paralyzing facial muscles—but botulinum toxin also is widely used for a variety of muscle-spasm conditions, such as cervical dystonia or severe neck spasms.

ACROSS THE NATION

Dust blamed in deadly refinery blast

PORT WENTWORTH, Ga. (AP)—Volatile dust was blamed Friday in an explosion that leveled a sugar refinery, and crews pulled four bodies from tunnels beneath the mangled mass of metal and beams left by the blast. At least four people known to be inside during the explosion were missing. Savannah police Sgt. Mike Wilson said no attempts would be made to find more bodies until Saturday, when heavy equipment will be brought in to remove debris. Search efforts were slowed by the instability of what was left of the refinery, gutted by flames and wracked by the impact of the blast itself.

Student kills 2, self at La. college

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—A 23-year-old woman killed two fellow students with a .357 revolver in a classroom at a vocational college Friday, then committed suicide, police said. The women apparently were shot in their seats in the second-floor classroom at Louisiana Technical College, Baton Rouge Sgt. Don Kelly said. About 20 people were in the emergency medical technology class at the time, he said. The victims were identified as Karsheika Graves, 21, and Taneshia Butler, 26, both of Baton Rouge. The shooter was Latina Williams, whose address was unknown, Kelly said.

Pelican may get off endangered list

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The brown pelican, once on the brink of extinction, has become so abundant that it should be removed from the list of endangered species, U.S. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne said on Friday. Under government supervision, the brown pelican has made a strong comeback after the species vanished from the state in the 1960s because of DDT contamination. The brown pelican was placed on the endangered list in 1970 throughout the United States, but it was taken off in 1985 along the Atlantic Coast and Alabama's Gulf Shore. It remains endangered in its western range, which includes Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, California, Washington and Oregon.

Court: Neb. electric chair not legal

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP)—The Nebraska Supreme Court ruled Friday that electrocution is cruel and unusual punishment, outlawing the electric chair in the only state that still used it as its sole means of execution. The evidence shows that electrocution inflicts "intense pain and agonizing suffering," the court said. "Condemned prisoners must not be tortured to death, regardless of their crimes," Judge William Connolly wrote in the 6-1 opinion. "Contrary to the State's argument, there is abundant evidence that prisoners sometimes will retain enough brain functioning to consciously suffer the torture high voltage electric current inflicts on a human body," Connolly wrote.

Asia

Malacañang tied to abduction

By GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

AP

Rodolfo Lozada Jr., a witness in a Senate corruption inquiry that has implicated President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's husband, testifies before the Philippine Senate Friday Feb. 8, 2008, in Manila, Philippines.

MANILA—Names that directly link Malacañang to the highly questionable, now aborted $329-million broadband deal cropped up when electronics and communications engineer Rodolfo Lozada Jr. testified Friday at the Senate. It is testimony officials had expressed fear could cause the downfall of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Testifying before the joint Senate committees on accountability of public officers & investigations (the blue ribbon) , trade and defense, Lozada said Environment Secretary Lito Atienza helped him go on his weeklong escape to Hong Kong to evade appearance before the upper chamber and again in his seizure by unknown men as he disembarked from his plane on Tuesday.

Lozada also named former Socioeconomic Secretary Romulo Neri, former chief of the presidential management staff Michael Defensor, Secretary for Special Concerns Remedios Poblador, Deputy Executive Secretary Manuel Gaite and other Palace functionaries.

"When I was coming back, Secretary Atienza called me up. He told me 'Jun huwag kang mag-alala. Relax ka lang. Mga tao natin yan. Maguusap lang kami ni ES (Ermita) at ni ma'am kung ano ang dapat gagawin," said Lozada. (Don't be afraid. Relax. These are our people. I will talk with ES and ma'am.)

Under questioning, Lozada said that he believed that the "ma'am" Atienza was referring to was "probably" Ms Arroyo.

He said he then called up Neri who told him: "Calm your wife down. They're panicking in the media." Neri suggested that he call his wife, but Lozada said: "Sir, she cannot calm down. I have to go. She has to see me. She will not stop."

Lozada said Atienza, who is Lozada's boss as president of the state-owned Philippine Forest Corp., and Neri, Lozada's friend, were responsible for his return trip. (Lozada resigned his post during his pre-dawn press conference on Thursday.)

He admitted that he left because he was afraid of appearing in the Senate. Even before the Senate issued its subpoena against him on Jan. 25, Lozada said he had already feared for his life since September when his name was first mentioned in the NBN hearing.

"When the subpoena came out, I asked Secretary Neri what should I do, and he said the Palace would take care of me," said Lozada.

Lozada had been asked by Neri to advise him on the project to wire the nation's bureaucracy electronically and had taken him with him in his discussions with project proponents. They included former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. who was lobbying for the Chinese firm ZTE, and losing bidder Joey de Venecia who blew the whistle on kickbacks and overpricing and linked First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo to the deal. Ms Arroyo scuttled the project in September.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Bhutto party rejects UK police findings

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Benazir Bhutto's supporters disputed a Scotland Yard finding Friday that a bomb not a bullet killed the ex-prime minister, and her party renewed its call for a full-scale international investigation into her death. The British investigators' report, released Friday after a 2 1/2-week investigation, concluded that Bhutto suffered a fatal head injury when the force of a blast from a suicide bomber hurled her against a lever on the roof of her armored vehicle. British investigators ruled out that the head injury could have been caused by a bullet. Pakistan's government announced a similar conclusion shortly after Bhutto's killing, which occurred Dec. 27 at the end of a political rally in Rawalpindi.

Avalanches kill 8 in Indian Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—Avalanches killed at least eight people and forced hundreds more to leave their snowbound villages Friday in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir, officials said. Six members of one family died when cascading snow buried their home in the Himalayan territory, said police official Farooq Khan. Police rescued a 2-year-old girl - the family's only surviving member - from the debris. Elsewhere, one woman died after an avalanche struck her village near the frontier dividing the Indian- and Pakistani-controlled parts of Kashmi. The woman's son and daughter were missing and feared dead. Snow also buried and killed a man in a mountain village in another part of Kashmir, said the area's superintendent of police, S.P. Pani.

Suicide bomb kills Afghan soldier, child

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—A suicide car bomber blew himself up near a convoy of Afghan troops on Friday, killing one soldier and a child who was nearby. Another four soldiers and a child were also wounded in the attack in central Ghazni province, provincial Gov. Faizullah Faizan said. A suicide car bomb targeting a NATO convoy left three soldiers lightly wounded in eastern Khost province Thursday, and a bungled suicide attack hurt two civilians in southwestern Nimroz province.

Sri Lanka says it killed 34 rebels

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Government troops attacked separatist Tamil bunkers along the front lines in Sri Lanka's embattled north, triggering gunbattles that killed 34 rebels and one soldier, the military said Friday. The soldiers destroyed three rebel bunkers in Thursday's push in the Vavuniya region, just south of the rebels' de facto state in the north, killing 20 guerrillas, a Defense Ministry official said. The fighting left six soldiers wounded. Also Thursday, soldiers fired artillery rounds to destroy a rebel boat in the sea off the northern Jaffna peninsula, killing four rebels. Separate clashes in the area left two other rebels dead.

Across the Globe

Eleven die in blaze at Austria elderly home

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—A fire engulfed a home for the elderly in western Austria on Friday, killing at least 11 people, a local government spokesman said.

Six people were injured, three of them seriously, said Thomas Mair, a spokesman for the regional government in the province of Vorarlberg.

"It is a catastrophe, completely terrible," Austrian Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer was quoted by the Austria Press Agency as saying after arriving at the scene late Friday.

Twenty-three residents and two supervisors were in the building when the fire started, Mair said. He could not immediately identify the dead or the injured.

The 11 victims died of smoke inhalation, APA reported.

Some 250 firefighters battled the blaze, eventually putting it out, Mair said.

Authorities are investigating the cause of the fire, which started in a first-floor room and quickly spread to the rest of the home, according to APA.

Austrian broadcaster ORF reported that thick smoke hampered rescue efforts in the 140-year-old building, which looked from photos to have a ground floor and three upper floors.

Egg, a town of roughly 3,500, is located near an Austrian region known for skiing and hiking.

The fire was the deadliest at an Austrian elderly home in recent memory, APA reported.

Two women burned to death in 1989 in an elderly home in the village of St. Stefan ob Leoben after a fire was sparked by an Easter candle left by a window.

Scholar: US sought help in Bolivia

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP)—An American scholar said Friday that an official at the U.S. Embassy asked him to keep tabs on Venezuelan and Cuban workers in Bolivia. Washington said that any such request would be an error and against U.S. policy.

"I was shocked," Fulbright scholar Alex van Schaick told The Associated Press. "I mean, this man's asking me to spy for the U.S. government." Van Schaick is one of six Fulbright scholars doing research in the country.

The U.S. Embassy in La Paz issued a statement Friday saying that "some routine information sessions about security given to certain American citizens included incorrect information. As soon as this was brought to our attention, appropriate measures were taken to assure that these errors would not be repeated."

U.S. State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos said in Washington that any such request would have been a mistake.

"Worldwide, we adhere to a strict understanding with the Peace Corps that their volunteers are not permitted to act in any sort of intelligence capacity," Gallegos said. "If anyone suggested that any members of either group provide information outside the scope of their work or positions, it was an error and is not U.S. government policy."

Sudan military bombs West Darfur towns

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP)—The Sudanese military said it bombed three towns in West Darfur while striking at rebel forces Friday as senior U.N. officials warned that security was deteriorating dramatically in Sudan's vast western region.

The U.N. officials told the Security Council that intensified fighting has worsened the plight of civilians and is hurting chances for a political settlement in the five-year conflict.

Darfur rebels denied any of their fighters were in the towns attacked by the government and said some 200 people were killed. They said helicopter gunships and fixed-wing aircraft battered Sirba, Sileia and Abu Suruj, setting buildings on fire and causing thousands to flee.

"The government attacked using aircraft bombardment, troops and janjaweed (Arab militiamen)," said Abdelaziz Ushar, a senior commander with the rebel Justice and Equality Movement.

Sudan's Arab-dominated government has been accused of unleashing janjaweed forces to commit atrocities against Darfur's ethnic African communities in the fight with rebel groups.

WORLD BRIEFS

US military: 5 soldiers killed in Iraq

NEW YORK (AP)—The U.S. military said five soldiers were killed Friday in two separate incidents in Iraq. Four soldiers died when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device while the troops were on a combat patrol northwest of Baghdad, the military said. In violence near Tikrit, another soldier and killed and three others wounded in an explosion near their vehicle as thy carried out operations in Tamim province, the military said in a statement. The wounded soldiers were transported to a coalition medical facility for treatment. No other information on the attacks was immediately released, and names of the casualties were being withheld pending family notification.

UN: Peacekeepers plan to leave Eritrea

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—In an unusual move, the United Nations is being forced to prepare an imminent pullout from Eritrea and plans to relocate all its peacekeeping troops there across the border in Ethiopia, senior U.N. officials and diplomats told The Associated Press on Friday. Because of restrictions imposed by the Eritrean government, U.N. personnel are down to their last remaining emergency reserves of diesel fuel to power generators, vehicles and other equipment for the 7 1/2-year-old peacekeeping operation. At last count, that operation had about 1,500 troops and 200 military observers, along with several hundred civilians and dozens of volunteers based out of Asmara, Eritrea and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

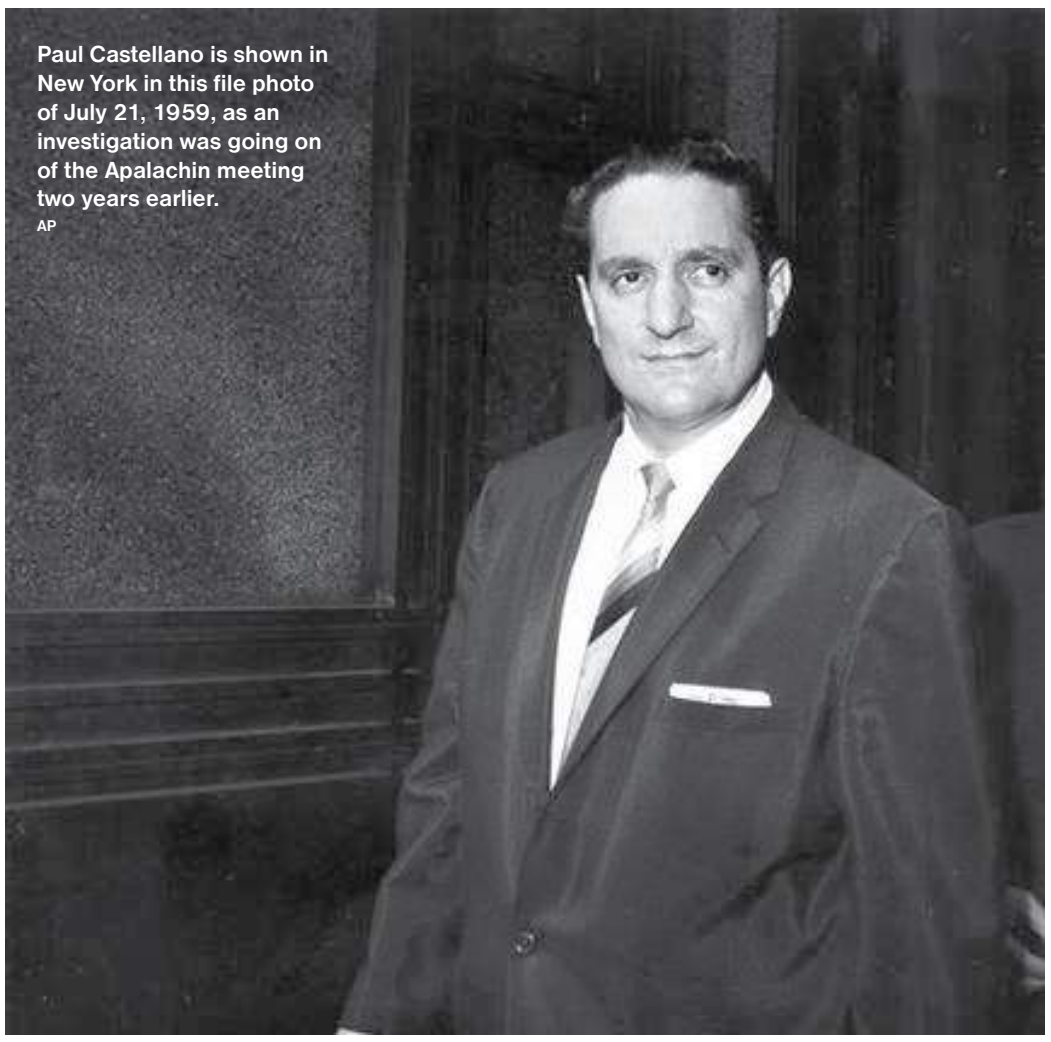
Iraq murder trial opens for Army sniper

BAGHDAD (AP)—The former commander of a U.S. Army sniper team testified Friday that he ordered one of his soldiers to kill an Iraqi who had stumbled on their hiding place, saying that was the only way to ensure the safety of his men in hostile territory. Sgt. Michael A. Hensley, who was a staff sergeant at the time of the killing last spring but was later demoted, gave his testimony on the opening day of a court-martial hearing a murder charge against Sgt. Evan Vela. Another member of the sniper unit testified the soldiers had been pushed to the brink of physical and mental exhaustion before the May 11 killing of Genei Nasir al-Janabi.

Probe of report on Sarkozy's love life

PARIS (AP)—The Paris prosecutor's office opened a preliminary investigation into a legal complaint brought by newly married French President Nicolas Sarkozy over a media report about his love life, a judicial official said Friday. The media report, posted Wednesday on the Web site of Nouvel Observatuer news magazine, alleged Sarkozy promised to call off his engagement if his ex-wife came back to him. Sarkozy filed a legal complaint Thursday accusing the site of having made the story up. The charges filed include "using falsehoods," and are punishable by up to three years in prison and fines of up to $65,560.

Focus



Paul Castellano is shown in New York in this file photo of July 21, 1959, as an investigation was going on of the Apalachin meeting two years earlier.
AP

Italian mobsters in widespread decline

NEW YORK (AP)—In early 2004, mob veteran Vincent Basciano took over as head of the Bonanno crime family. The reign of the preening, pompadoured Mafioso known as Vinny Gorgeous lasted only slightly longer than a coloring dye job from his Bronx hair salon.

Within a year, the ex-beauty shop owner with the hair-trigger temper was behind bars—betrayed by his predecessor, a stand-up guy now sitting down with the FBI.

It was a huge blow to Basciano and the once-mighty Bonannos, and similar scenarios are playing out from coast to coast. The Mafia, memorably described as "bigger than U.S. Steel" by mob financier Meyer Lansky, is more of an illicit mom-and-pop operation in the new millennium.

The mob's frailties were evident in recent months in Chicago, where three senior-citizen mobsters were locked up for murders committed a generation ago; in Florida, where a 97-year-old Mafioso with a rap sheet dating to the days of Lucky Luciano was imprisoned for racketeering; and in New York, where 80-something boss Matty "The Horse" Ianniello pleaded to charges linked to the garbage industry and union corruption.

Things are so bad that mob scion John A. "Junior" Gotti chose to quit the mob while serving five years in prison rather than return to his spot atop the Gambino family.

At the mob's peak in the late 1950s, more than two dozen families operated nationwide. Disputes were settled by the Commission, a sort of gangland Supreme Court. Corporate change came in a spray of gunfire. This was the mob of "The Godfather" celebrated in pop culture.

Today, Mafia families in former strongholds like Cleveland, Los Angeles and Tampa are gone. La Cosa Nostra—our thing, as its initiates called the mob—is in serious decline everywhere but New York City. And even there, things aren't so great: Two of New York's five crime families are run in absentia by bosses behind bars.

Mob executions are also a blast from the past. The last boss whacked was the Gambinos' "Big Paul" Castellano in 1985. New York's last mob shooting war occurred in 1991. And in Chicago, home to the 1929 St. Valentine's Day massacre, the last hit linked to the "Outfit" went down in the mid-1990s.

The Mafia's ruling Commission has not met in years. Membership in key cities is dwindling, while the number of mob turncoats is soaring.

"You arrest 10 people," says one New York FBI agent, "and you have eight of them almost immediately knocking on your door: `OK, I wanna cut a deal.'"

The oath of omerta—silence—has become a joke. Ditto for the old world "Family" values—honor, loyalty, integrity—that served as cornerstones for an organization brought to America by Italian immigrants during the era of Prohibition.

"It's been several generations since they left Sicily," says Dave Shafer, head of the FBI organized crime division in New York. "It's all about money."

Which doesn't mean the Mafia is dead. But organized crime experts say the Italian mob is seriously wounded: shot in the foot by its own loudmouth members, bloodied by scores of convictions, and crippled by a loss of veteran leaders and a dearth of capable replacements.

■ ■ ■

The Bonannos, along with New York's four other borgatas (or families), emerged from a bloody mob war that ended in 1931. The Mafia then became one of the nation's biggest growth industries, extending its reach into legitimate businesses like concrete and garbage carting and illegal pursuits like gambling and loansharking. The mob always operated in the black.

Things began to change in the mid-1980s, when the Mafia was caught in a crossfire of RICO, rats and recorded conversations. The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations act handed mob prosecutors an unprecedented tool, making even minor crimes eligible for stiff prison terms.

The 20-year sentences gave authorities new leverage, and mobsters who once served four-year terms without flinching were soon helping prosecutors.

"A good RICO is virtually impossible to defend," insists Notre Dame law professor G. Robert Blakey, who drafted the law while serving as counsel to Sen. John McClellan in 1970. The results proved him right.

The first major RICO indictment came in 1985, with the heads of three New York families and five other top level Mafiosi eventually convicted. It took nearly two decades, but the heads of all five New York families were jailed simultaneously in 2003.

Authorities around the country were soon using Blakey's statute and informants against Italian organized crime in their cities.

■ In Philadelphia, where the mob was so widespread that Bruce Springsteen immortalized the 1981 killing of Philip "Chicken Man" Testa in his song "Atlantic City," one mob expert estimates the Mafia presence is down to about a dozen hardcore "made" men. Their number was once about 80.

■ The New England mob claims barely two dozen remaining made members—about half the number involved 25 years ago. The Boston underboss awaits trial.

■ In Chicago, home of Al Capone, the head of the local FBI office believes fewer than 30 made men remain. That figure stood at more than 100 in 1990. The city's biggest mob trial in decades ended recently with the convictions of three old-timers for murders from the 1970s and '80s.

■ In Los Angeles, there's still a Mafia problem—"La Eme," the Mexican Mafia. An aging leadership in the Italian mob, along with successful prosecutions, left most of the local "gangsters" hanging out on movie sets.

■ The Florida family dominated by Santos Trafficante, the powerful boss linked to assassination plots targeting President John F. Kennedy and Cuban leader Fidel Castro, is gone. The beachfront Mafia of the 21st century is mostly transplanted New Yorkers, and money generated by the local rackets isn't kicked up the chain of command as in the past.

"You have guys running around doing their own thing," says Joe Cicini, supervisor of the FBI's South Florida mob investigations. "They don't have the work ethic or the discipline that the older generation had."

The decline of "Family values" is nothing new. Back in January 1990, a government bug caught no less an expert than Gambino boss John Gotti wondering if the next generation of mobsters was equal to their forebears.

"Where are we gonna find them, these kind of guys?" Gotti asked. "I'm not being a pessimist. It's getting tougher, not easier!"

During the same conversation, Gotti questioned the resumes of a half-dozen candidates for made man: "I want guys that done more than killing."

Even harder, it would turn out, was finding guys who could keep their mouths shut.

■ ■ ■

"Mob informant" was once an oxymoron, but today the number of rats is enormous—and growing with each indictment. And the mob's storied ability to exact retribution on informants is virtually nonexistent.

"There is no more secret society," says Matthew Heron, the FBI's Organized Crime Section Chief in Washington.

"In the past, you'd start out with the lowest level and try to work your way up," Heron continues. Now "it's like playing leapfrog. You go right over everybody else to the promised land."

Basciano, 48, the one-time owner of the "Hello Gorgeous" beauty parlor, faces an upcoming trial for plotting to kill a federal prosecutor. The case was brought after his old boss, "Big Joey" Massino, wore a wire into a jailhouse meeting where the alleged hit was discussed.

By the time Massino went public with his plea deal in June 2005, another 50 Bonanno associates had been convicted in three years. The number of colleagues who testified against them, going right up to Massino, was in double digits. Basciano now faces the rest of his life in prison.

The Bonanno family is now led by the inexperienced "Sal The Ironworker" Montagna, just 35 years old, according to the FBI. Montagna shares one trait with his family's founder: He, too, is a Sicilian immigrant.

The mob of the 21st century still makes money the old-fashioned way: gambling, loansharking, shakedowns. Three Genovese family associates were busted this month for extorting or robbing businessmen in New York and New Jersey, making off with $1 million.

There are other, more modern scams: The Gambino family collected $230 million in fraudulent credit card fees linked to pornographic Web sites. Another crooked plan grossed more than $420 million when calls made to "free" phone services triggered unauthorized monthly fees on victims' phone bills.

After getting busted, mobsters are quick to offer advice to the FBI about allocating the agency's investigative resources.

"I can't tell you how many times we've gone to arrest people, and the first thing a wiseguy says is, `You should be going after the terrorists," said Seamus McElearney, head of the FBI's Colombo crime family squad in New York. "They say it all the time: `You should be doing that.'

"And leaving them alone."

AP
Italy's national anti-Mafia prosecutor Piero Grasso looks on during a press conference at the Iterior Ministry building, in Rome, Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008. Police launched raids on Mafia hideouts in New York and Italy on Thursday, arresting dozens of suspected mobsters accused of controlling drug trafficking on both sides of the Atlantic. Officials were hunting down 30 suspects in Italy and more than 60 in New York as part of operation "Old Bridge", all alleged members of clans linked to Salvatore Lo Piccolo, the Sicilian Mafia boss arrested in November, and New York's Gambino crime family, Italy's Interior Ministry said.

Life & Style

Good things come in small spaces

By TERRI SAPIENZA
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WASHINGTON—When Barton Seaver bought his condo last year, he didn't care that the kitchen was tiny. He didn't even mind the Formica countertops, linoleum floors and electric range. "I saw the kitchen, and I knew I could use it and said, `Good enough.' "

Such indifference may sound surprising coming from a professional chef and sommelier at Hook restaurant in Georgetown, where the kitchen is specifically designed to be a "showpiece, part of the entertainment."

But that's where he works. At home, a much more modest space suits Seaver just fine.

"I have zero complaints," says the 28-year-old D.C. native. "It serves me and my girlfriend very well. It's not a kitchen where you can have little kids, but that's not my life right now. I'm not home enough to require a masterpiece kitchen. I'm perfectly happy and happy to have more dining room space."

When Seaver cooks at home, it's typically on Sundays and—he says he hates to sound cliched, but—it's usually something bought at the farmers market that morning. His favorite meal: roast chicken. "It's a satisfying meal to cook and to eat. There is something very soothing and comforting about it." (Foodies,

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Chef Barton Seaver in his kitchen at home. Trophy-kitchen dreamers, take note: Seaver says smaller spaces have big advantages.
THE WASHINGTON POST

Chef Barton Seaver prefers white dishware because it doesn't upstage the food.
THE WASHINGTON POST

BARTON SEAVER CHEF AT HOME

"I had a bigger kitchen once and didn't like it. It was more than I needed."

WASHINGTON–Barton Seaver, chef at Hook in Georgetown:
■ **Favorite thing about his kitchen:** Though it's small, it has plenty of countertop space.
■ **Least favorite thing:** The lighting. "Overhead lighting, in general, is not good."
■ **Wishes he had:** A gas range. "Electric works fine, but gas is infinitely better."
■ **Cooking tips:** You need only one good knife: a six- or seven-inch all-purpose model. Clean as you go. It helps keep work surfaces clean. "Home cooks clean up after; restaurant cooks clean as they go. Chefs never make anything dirty."
■ **On white dishes:** "The food should stand out, not the plates. White plates will always look good."
■ **Recent purchase:** A Schlemmertopf, a clay cooker for lamb, veal shanks, risotto, etc. "It was about $35 and well worth it."

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Where enough is really enough

By TERRI SAPIENZA
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Cristeta Comerford works at the most well-known address in the world. She cooks for the president of the United States and a nonstop parade of powerful and famous visitors to the White House. But at the end of the day there's no place she'd rather be than in her family's Columbia,

See WHERE on Page 21

THE WASHINGTON POST
White House executive chef Cristeta Comerford in her kitchen at home, where comfort is key.

CRISTETA COMERFORD CHEF AT HOME

"A super-big kitchen will overwhelm you. It's there, but it's not useful."

WASHINGTON–Cristeta Comerford, White House executive chef:
■ **Most important element of a kitchen:** Layout. Because it has to make sense to you and should reflect your lifestyle. "All chefs work differently; they have different nuances, different pet peeves."
■ **Renovation tips:** Before doing anything, assess your lifestyle, your personality and how you work in the kitchen. Take note of how you do everything: the way you store and arrange items. These things will influence the layout and even the appliances you pick.
■ **Favorite tools:** A microplane (fast and easy to clean), cast-iron skillet (versatile, durable), a professional mixer ("a must-have for every chef") and an immersion blender (small, quick, easy to clean).
■ **Something you wish you had at home:** "A sous-chef."

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

No room for clutter

By TERRI SAPIENZA
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The past few years have been pretty busy for Geoff Tracy.

He opened his third restaurant in six years (Lia's in Chevy Chase, Md.). He and wife Norah O'Donnell, a correspondent for MSNBC, bought, gutted and renovated their home. And they started a family: Twins Henry and Grace are 8 months old.

But in redesigning their home kitchen, Tracy, 35, says they definitely did not look to his restaurants for inspiration. "I don't like a lot of clutter," he said, "and in a professional kitchen it's naturally cluttered because everything is easily accessible and visible."

Their choice: lots of cabinets. Just about everything—including the microwave, dish-

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THE WASHINGTON POST
Chef Geoff Tracy's kitchen is divided into three sections. "I don't like a lot of clutter," he said.

GEOFF TRACY CHEF AT HOME

"I'm a minimalist. I don't like a lot of clutter."

WASHINGTON–Geoff Tracy, owner of Chef Geoff's, Chef Geoff's Downtown and Lia's
■ **Countertop:** "Granite is great because it never gets damaged." But he chose limestone because it is "more European, and the patina shows up a little more as it gets older. Getting older is not necessarily a bad thing when it comes to countertops."
■ **Remodeling advice:** Layout and space management are critical. Get help from a kitchen designer if you can. You can tell the designer what you want, and he can tell you what's reasonable. (Tracy's designer turned a plain, blank wall into a four-cabinet pantry.)
■ **What he likes:** Commercial-size hood. It's loud, but it gets rid of odors from fish, grease, etc. Viking appliances. "I felt like they were the most solid, durable and long-lasting." Recessed lighting. "The more the merrier." All are on dimmers.
■ **What he would do differently:** Install radiant heating under the floors and add a second dishwasher.

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Family, friends bid farewell to Ledger

PERTH, Australia (AP)—Heath Ledger's family joined celebrities and other mourners Saturday to bid farewell to the actor at a memorial service in his Australian hometown that began with a haunting Aboriginal dirge.

Ledger's former fiancee, actress Michelle Williams, arrived along with his parents and sister at Penrhos College, where about 100 other mourners had gather to honor the 28-year-old "Brokeback Mountain" star who died of an accidental prescription drug overdose in his Manhattan apartment last month.

Williams, wearing dark glasses and a white dress with black trim, was not accompanied by Matilda, her 2-year-old daughter with Ledger.

Australian actress Cate Blanchett, who starred with Ledger in the Bob Dylan bioflick, "I'm Not There," a role that earned her an Oscar nomination for best supporting actress, was among the celebrities present.

Ledger's father Kim said the service will be followed by a private funeral in Perth. He appealed for privacy and did not disclose the time or location.

"The funeral will be very, very private and there will only be 10 people there, immediate family and nobody else," Kim Ledger told reporters earlier in the day.

"It's a pretty sad time. We're finding it difficult to cope by ourselves, let alone cope with everybody around the world," he said.

"Having said that, we do really appreciate the outpouring and the emotional support from all over the globe," he added.

Mourners at the high-security service filed through a screened side gate where two women dressed in black checked their identification.

Among the first to arrive at Penrhos College was Australian model Gemma Ward, a former girlfriend of the 28-year-old "Brokeback Mountain" star. Wearing dark glasses with a black top and skirt, Ward filed with other mourners through a screened side gate where two women dressed in black checked their identification.

Local musician Levi Islam told reporters outside that he opened the service in a theater by playing an ancient Aboriginal dirge with a didgeridoo, a traditional wind instrument.

Ledger's death on Jan. 22 drew outpourings of grief from New York to Hollywood to Perth, a small and remote city on the verge of the Outback in Australia's southwest.

Family members returned home from the United States this week to lay Ledger to rest following a memorial service in Los Angeles last weekend.

Williams, 27, and Ledger became a couple during filming of "Brokeback Mountain," in which the two costarred as husband and wife. Ledger was nominated for an Oscar for his performance in the film.

They later moved to New York, where Matilda was born in October 2005.

Former fiancee and Brockback Mountain co-star Michelle Williams, left, and sister Kate Ledger arrive at a memorial service for the late Hollywood actor Heath Ledger in Perth, Australia, Saturday, Feb. 9, 2008. AP

GOOD

From Page 20

take note: He braises the chicken and slides thinly sliced lemon and butter under the skin.)

Trophy-kitchen dreamers, also take note: Seaver says smaller spaces have big advantages. They're easier to clean, and they enforce organization. "Training as a chef is learning to cook in very small spaces," he says. "Restaurant kitchens have very small spaces." Plus, he says, a little kitchen "stays very much a kitchen—not a storage place, a TV room or a place to lose the keys."

Which is not to say he would not enjoy having a generous space one day. His ultimate kitchen would be "in a farmhouse where the entire first floor is nothing but kitchen and living space." It would have warm natural light, painted pine cabinets, marble countertops, a farmhouse sink and varnished pine floors "that are worn-in in the front of the stove and sink."

What he would really love, though, is an old cast-iron, wood-burning stove with four burners, painted a smoky blue like his current kitchen walls. "I love cooking with wood," he says. "When the cooking source becomes an ingredient on its own, it's just sexy."

NO ROOM

From Page 20

washer and stereo system—is tucked behind walls of pristine white cabinetry.

For streamlined efficiency they divided the room into three distinct sections: a prep area, a plate area (with dish storage, sink and dishwasher) and a beverage area (glasses above, wine storage below). A small sitting room is off to the side. They put in two sinks (one near the stove for prepping, the other near the dishwasher for cleanup) and installed strips of electrical outlets concealed under the upper cabinets. They chose professional-grade stainless-steel appliances, limestone countertops, a mirrored backsplash (it's low-maintenance and makes the room look bigger) and white oak flooring. ("The wood is pretty hard on your feet," Tracy says, "so I have a woven matt by the stove for extra softness.")

Despite all the top-grade finishes and furnishings, Tracy's favorite detail is fairly simple: a stainless-steel sleeve built into the countertop next to the stove to store his knives (an idea he said he stole from celebrity chef Mario Batali).

Long hours at the restaurants limit Tracy's home cooking to the weekends, when he makes quick pasta dishes and, at least once a week, blueberry pancakes. ("My wife insists.") When entertaining, he prefers meals that are "fun and easy," like the Thanksgiving they hosted for 24 people where he whipped up homemade dough and the kids lined up along the center island and made pizzas.

And he reserves an hour every Saturday for making a week's supply of food for the twins: pureed fruits and vegetables frozen in ice cube trays. For this, Tracy uses his current must-have appliance: a Vita-Prep, which he describes as "a blender on steroids."

Another must-have in the kitchen for Tracy: music.

"Doesn't everyone enjoy that?" he asks. "Can you cook without country music?"

WHERE

From Page 20

Md., home, particularly in the kitchen.

For the Philippines-born Comerford, comfort is key—hardly surprising given her unpredictable work schedule, which can sometimes stretch to 80 hours a week. So she savors her own kitchen, which opens into a family room where she, her husband, John, and 6-year-old daughter, Danielle, spend most of their time sharing meals, talking, doing homework, entertaining friends.

"It's very open, comfortable and convenient," says Comerford, 45. "It's not intimidating. When people come over, they go straight to the kitchen. It's the heart of the home."

They have lived in the house almost six years, and there are a few things they hope to change in the kitchen. "You're never satisfied with what you have," Comerford says. "It's human."

Plans include bumping out the back wall to expand the rooms. ("Just a little, not too much.") Also on the wish list: white marble countertops (though she says her current Corian is easy to clean and maintain); an undermounted sink ("they're easier to clean"); and a center island with a sink, cooktop and stools. She also wants more storage space; now they have to keep some kitchen items in the garage and basement.

But there's no rush. Comerford says the space is convenient and efficient for their needs right now, "which is, basically, feed our daughter."

And she's used to space constraints. The White House kitchen has top-of-the-line appliances and surfaces but, Comerford says, the overall area is very small compared with some of the hotels and restaurants where she has worked. It is a residence, after all, she says: "It's efficient and utilitarian. Not luxurious."

Cooking for large groups does requires large equipment, however, so while the square footage is not super-size, everything else is. "At work I have bowls that are this big," she says, stretching her arms out in a wide circle. Her largest job? A congressional picnic for 3,000.

When she cooks at home, it's usually something "really, really quick, like 15 minutes," based on whatever is on hand. "That's what's good about being a professional chef. You have to learn to be very versatile with what you have." Happily, her husband is a former chef, so he does his share of the cooking.

And it appears that culinary talent runs in the family. Their daughter is only in first grade but already has a sophisticated palate, Comerford says. She participates in tastings with her parents, has her own recipe file and wears a chef's hat when she cooks, standing on a stool. "When we go out to dinner, she'll say, 'Mommy, the mussels are overcooked,'" Comerford says. "I say, 'Don't tell me, I'm not the chef.'"

THE WASHINGTON POST

For White House executive chef Cristeta Comerford, the kitchen of her home is comfortable and convenient. Still, she plans to expand the space eventually, making room for more storage and a center island.

Court: Britney's dad can fire manager

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A Superior Court commissioner gave Britney Spears' father the power to fire the singer's business manager, according to documents released Friday.

Commissioner Reva Goetz also ordered Howard Grossman to turn over "all documents, records and assets relating to Britney Spears" to James Spears, who is the court-appointed conservator of his daughter and her estate.

Goetz issued her decision after an emergency closed-door hearing requested Thursday by James Spears. Grossman showed up at the hearing, but he and others were ordered to leave the courtroom.

Grossman would not say if had been fired or how long he had worked for Spears.

"My reputation speaks for itself," he said, declining to comment further on the order because it would be speculative.

Meanwhile, attorneys who have represented Spears in her child custody battle with ex-husband Kevin Federline filed papers to withdraw from that case.

Attorney Sorrell Trope filed papers in Los Angeles Superior Court asking to quit the case, said court spokeswoman Mary Hearn. Trope previously withdrew a similar request.

Spears' parents have moved aggressively to take control of their daughter's life since she was hospitalized in a psychiatric ward Jan. 31.

On the same day James Spears won conservator status last week, his wife, Lynne, successfully applied for a restraining order against Sam Lutfi, his daughter's frequent companion and sometimes manager.

Lynne Spears told the court that Lutfi had treated her daughter like a hostage in her own home, drugged her and took over her finances.

"Sam told me, 'You'd better learn that I control everything,'" Lynne Spears wrote in a declaration filed with the court. "'I control Howard Grossman, Britney's business manager. I control her attorneys and the security guards at the gate. They don't listen to Britney, they listen to me.'"

Grossman said Friday that he had no association with Lutfi.

Spears' parents went to court Thursday after saying they feared their daughter's life was at risk after she was released from a hospital psychiatric ward on Wednesday.

Spears' affairs were placed under a temporary conservatorship after she was taken to UCLA Medical Center on Jan. 31 under heavy police escort. It was the second time in a month she had been taken from her home by ambulance.

Conservatorships are granted for people deemed unable to care for themselves or their affairs. The conservatorship lasts until Feb. 14.

Spears was discharged from the hospital against the recommendation of her psychiatrist and her parents' wishes.

Her parents said they were extremely disappointed she was released and they were deeply concerned about her "safety and vulnerability and we believe her life is presently at risk."

Spears slipped out of the hospital unnoticed by the pack of paparazzi that follow her every move in public, but they gave chase later in the day when she left her home behind the wheel of her Mercedes-Benz. She eventually showed up at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Spears' public life has been in a tailspin since she filed for divorce from Federline in late 2006. The swarm of photographers that tail her have captured incidents of bizarre behavior, erratic driving and public meltdowns.

She has lost custody and visitation rights with her sons, Jayden James, 1, and Sean Preston, 2.

Early last month, Spears was hospitalized after police were called to her home during a custody dispute.

Winehouse gets visa, too late for awards

LONDON (AP)—Amy Winehouse's work visa was approved after all, but the State Department's change of heart Friday wasn't in time for her to make the trip to Sunday's Grammy Awards.

Instead, the rehabbing British singer will go ahead with the backup plan that was concocted while her visa was still in limbo: a live performance, via satellite, from a studio in London where she will also accept any awards that may come her way. Winehouse and her acclaimed "Back to Black" album are nominated for Grammys in six categories.

Winehouse

"Unfortunately, due to the logistics involved and timing complications, Amy will not be traveling to the U.S. to perform at the Grammys in person," the Outside Organization said in a statement.

Winehouse's original visa application was denied under U.S. immigration rules regarding the "use and abuse of narcotics," a senior State Department official said Friday, on condition of anonymity because the U.S. Embassy in London's application deliberations are confidential. As a British citizen, Winehouse would not normally need a visa to enter the United States—unless she wanted to work or perform.

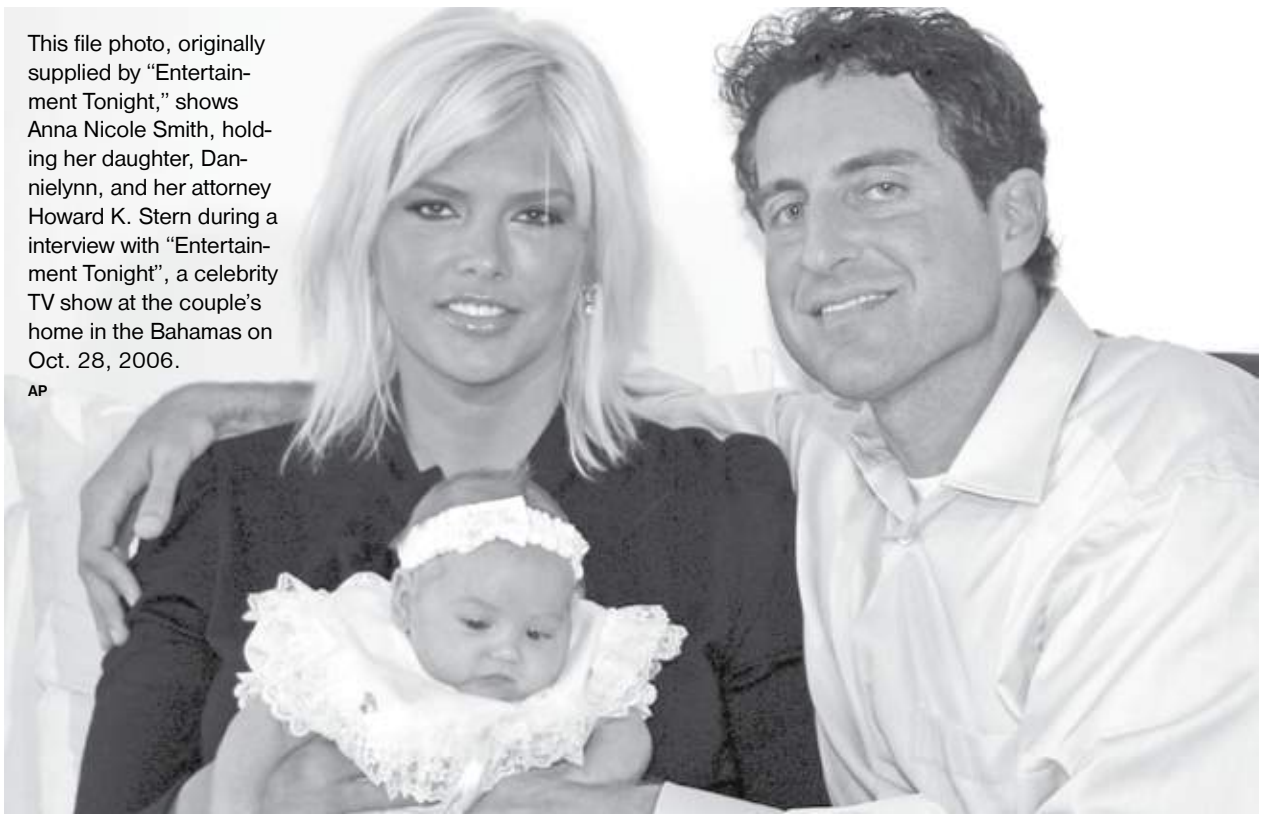
The Department of Homeland Security had been "rapidly" processing her appeal, the official said. But the reversal, barely 48 hours before the beginning of the telecast, came too late.

"Amy would like to thank all of those people, in particular the staff involved at the U.S. Embassy in London, who have all worked so hard to expedite her application," Outside said. "She is looking forward to being a part of the 50th Annual Grammy Awards with her Sunday night performance and to going back to the U.S. soon."

Even if Winehouse had been able to board a non-stop flight from London to Los Angeles immediately after her visa came through Friday, the earliest she would have arrived would have been the wee hours of Saturday morning. That grueling itinerary would have left little time for her to rest and recover from a more than 12-hour journey, rehearse, and face the inevitable storm of attention that's been building during the will-she-or-won't-she-be-there drama of the past days.

Winehouse's potent blend of blues, jazz, pop and soul has won praise from critics and fans, but her chaotic personal life has increasingly upstaged her music. Concerned family members regularly beg Winehouse to seek help in letters splashed across the pages of British tabloid newspapers and magazines.

Last month, The Sun newspaper ran still images from a video that it claimed showed Winehouse inhaling fumes from a small pipe. The images were said to have been filmed during a party at her London home.


This file photo, originally supplied by "Entertainment Tonight," shows Anna Nicole Smith, holding her daughter, Dannielynn, and her attorney Howard K. Stern during a interview with "Entertainment Tonight", a celebrity TV show at the couple's home in the Bahamas on Oct. 28, 2006.
AP

Bahamas remembers Anna Nicole Smith

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP)—Anna Nicole Smith's lawyer-turned-companion recalled her in worshipful terms Friday at a memorial in the Bahamas, the island nation where a bitter custody dispute broke out after the reality TV star's death in Florida a year ago.

Howard K. Stern, speaking to dozens of people gathered at the cemetery where Smith and her son are buried, said there was "nobody stronger, nobody smarter, nobody more compassionate, nobody funnier and certainly nobody more beautiful" than the former model and actress.

Smith died Feb. 8, 2007, in Hollywood, Florida, from an overdose of prescription drugs. The former Playboy playmate, model and potential heir to an oil fortune was 39. "We loved her. We respected her," Stern said. "I worshipped her and I still do."

Smith and Stern moved to the Bahamas, where they lived in a gated, oceanfront home on New Providence Island and she gave birth to a daughter, Dannielynn, in September 2006.

Smith's death set off a fight over where she should be buried and who would get custody of Dannielynn - Stern, ex-boyfriend Larry Birkhead or Virgie Arthur, the former model's mother. Custody of the girl eventually went to Birkhead after DNA tests proved he was the father.

Birkhead and Dannielynn attended the memorial service at the pink-walled Lakeview Memorial Gardens along with dozens of Smith's friends from the United States and the Bahamas.

Smith often played the part of a dizzy blonde bombshell, but Stern told the mourners it was just a role - and she was aware that people tried to take advantage of her.

"Few people who knew Anna might not realize how smart she actually was because unless she wanted you to know you didn't know," he said.

"When Anna died part of me died. The best part," he added.

Within days of Dannielynn's birth, Smith's 20-year-old son, Daniel, died while visiting his celebrity mother in a Nassau hospital. A coroner and a private pathologist hired by the family concluded he likely died from a combination of drugs, including methadone and antidepressants.

An inquest to establish the formal cause of death has proceeded fitfully since it began last month because of efforts to bring witnesses from outside the Bahamas. It is scheduled to resume next month.

Smith married Texas oil tycoon J. Howard Marshall II in 1994 when he was 89 and she was 26. He died in 1995 and Smith fought Marshall's family over his estimated $500 million estate.

'Project Runway' walks the real runway

NEW YORK (AP)—For Victoria Beckham, there was a clear winner at the "Project Runway" show Friday at New York Fashion Week. But she wasn't telling who.

Beckham is a guest judge for the two-part finale, which airs Feb. 27 and March 5.

"That one person really made me smile," Beckham said. "Everything I saw, I would wear myself."

Five remaining contestants presented collections Friday to a celebrity-studded audience at the Bryant Park tents. There was some reality show synergy in the front row with Tyson Beckford and Nikki Taylor of "Make Me a Supermodel," Padma Lakshmi and Ted Allen from "Top Chef," and a few former competitors from "America's Next Top Model" on the runway.

Several "Project Runway" contestants choked up at the sight of the overflowing audience. Only three collections will be televised on Bravo, but producers want to avoid giving a hint of who the finalists are.

Christian Siriano, the contestant fans love to hate, was a tent favorite with an avant-garde collection playing with feathers, oversized ruffles and curvy blazers with wide shoulders and flared hips.

Rami Kashou focused on beautiful dresses, using softly layered draping, ruffles and a checkerboard weave. Models were styled as goddesses for the collection he said "celebrates women."

Jillian Lewis showed standout coats—one with a wide collar in metallic herringbone, and another with cutouts in the elbows and a ruffled hem showing a peek of red.

Chris March, the costume designer and fan favorite, went for high drama with velvet, beading and brocade. He also showed his sense of humor with his use of a hair-like fringe and a flowing halter dress embossed with the image of the Mona Lisa.

Kathleen "Sweet P" Vaughn had a very wearable collection, playing with trends seen elsewhere this Fashion Week of mustard yellow, purple and exposed zippers. A green-gold tiered dress and long coat were standouts.

"It's going to be very, very hard for us to judge them today," said host Heidi Klum. The last contestant to be "aufed" by Klum, Ricky Lizalde, said he was rooting for Jillian and Rami. "I think both of their crafts were up to par," he said. He didn't comment on Christian, a vocal critic of his.

Lizalde, who is probably best known for his frequent crying, said he felt good about how he was portrayed.

Coroner: Renfro OD'd on heroin, morphine

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The death last month of troubled 25-year-old actor Brad Renfro was caused by a heroin and morphine overdose, according to the coroner's report released Friday. The Los Angeles County coroner's office ruled Renfro's death was accidental. His body was found on Jan. 15 in his home.

Renfro began his film career at 12, acting opposite Susan Sarandon and Tommy Lee Jones in "The Client," which was based on a John Grisham best-seller. He followed with major parts in the 1995 AIDS drama "The Cure," the 1997 "Sleepers," and "Telling Lies in America," also 1997.

Renfro's legal and substance problems often overshadowed his work.

He served 10 days in jail in 2006 after pleading no contest to driving while intoxicated and guilty to attempted possession of heroin. The latter charge stemmed from his arrest in Los Angeles' Skid Row area, when he attempted to buy the drug from an undercover officer.

Other run-ins with the law included a 1998 charge of cocaine and marijuana possession, for which he avoided jail time in a plea deal. He was also placed on probation and ordered to pay $4,000 for repairs to a 45-foot yacht he and a friend tried to steal in Florida in 2000.

In 2001, Renfro was charged with underage drinking and violating the terms of his probation. He was ordered into alcohol rehabilitation at the time.

Actor Brad Renfro is shown in this Oct. 18, 2004, file photo in New York.

AP

Hill withdraws from Aretha tribute

AP

Faith Hill arrives at the 42nd Annual Academy of Country Music Awards in this May 15, 2007, file photo, in Las Vegas.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—A bronchial infection forced Faith Hill to withdraw from a MusiCares tribute to Aretha Franklin. "I am devastated and deeply disappointed," the 40-year-old country singer said in a statement late Thursday.

"I have been looking forward to being part of this event for months, and even after being diagnosed with a bronchial infection I came to L.A. anyway hoping that I'd be able to sing. I simply can't."

Hill was to join Fantasia, John Legend, Herbie Hancock, Shirley Caesar, the Blues Brothers, Bill Cosby and others Friday in honoring Franklin as the 2008 MusiCares Person of the Year. The show was be taped for broadcast on PBS.

MusiCares is a Recording Academy charity that supports the arts community and music education programs.

Franklin, 65, is up for her 18th Grammy Award on Sunday, nominated for best gospel performance for a duet with Mary J. Blige. The Grammys will air live from the Staples Center in Los Angeles on CBS.

"Aretha is a musical hero and she deserves all of the accolades that she receives," Hill said. "I only hope that I'll get the chance to be a part of something like this in the future."

Billy Joel to make 'last play' at Shea

NEW YORK (AP)— Billy Joel will make "The Last Play at Shea" in a final concert at Shea Stadium on July 16. The Piano Man will perform the night after baseball's All-Star game at Yankee Stadium, the Mets announced Thursday.

"It's an honor to help throw Shea the ultimate concert farewell party," said Joel, 58. "As a sports fan and a music lover, I will always have a place for Shea Stadium in my heart. I thank the Mets for giving me and my fans a chance to rock Shea Stadium one last time for the ages."

A new stadium, Citi Field, is to open for the 2009 season.

Cornwell gives $1 million for CSI in NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—Patricia Cornwell is donating $1 million to a top criminal justice college for a new academy to teach CSI techniques.

The best-selling novelist said she's taking action because she's appalled by what she's seen at crime scene investigations.

"I've seen cops walk through blood. I've seen them leave their own fingerprints on a window," Cornwell said in an interview Friday. "I've seen bloody clothing put in a plastic bag, instead of a paper bag, so it decomposes."

AP

Author Patricia Cornwell poses in her home in New York in this Oct. 27, 2005, file photo.

Her funding will help start the Crime Scene Academy at New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice, set to open this fall with training in DNA typing, fingerprint enhancement techniques, ballistics and forensic psychology.

The 51-year-old author has written more than a dozen books featuring Dr. Kay Scarpetta, a medical examiner. Her latest is "Book of the Dead."

Praised for her meticulous research, Cornwell blames television and movies for misleading the public on how crimes are investigated. "It's like 'Star Trek' compared to the real Air Force," she said.

Celebs troop to Fashion Week

NEW YORK (AP)—Celebs catcalling at Fashion Week? More like giving props to a runway model's smooth recovery.

At Rebecca Taylor show, the runway was decked out in gold sparkles, bordered by the requisite smattering of gliteratti, including actresses Carmen Electra, Amy Smart, and Katrina Bowden - some of whom whooped and hollered when a model broke a heel and then nonchalantly removed her shoes and continued down the catwalk, the shoes dangling in her hands.

The collection was filled with flouncy sheer floral dresses. Backstage, Stacy London, co-host of the TLC show "What Not To Wear," summed up the look: "They make you wish you didn't have boobs."

Also present at Thursday's show was actress and comedian Aisha Tyler, who has been at half a dozen of this week's shows.

"I love Fashion Week," said the six-foot tall stunner. "It's an exciting time because you get to see so much creativity and so many brilliant ideas brought to life on the runway. As an artist myself, I can respect the time and passion they put into this."

This is the first time Tyler has stuck around for more than just a day or two of Fashion Week, she said, and in likelihood, it'll be the last. Why?

Turns out that the front row celebs require a lot more prep time than the fashion models, who often need to get primped and preened in a matter of minutes.

"I'm tired from it all - all the changing, the makeup, the hair ... ." she said, trailing off. "To be ready for a one o'clock show, you have to be up at like six o'clock. You have strangers in your room helping you get ready, when all you really want to be doing is taking it easy."

Daughter fearful of father who's fallen off the wagon

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 14-year-old girl and an only child. My parents, "Ellie" and "Miles," are divorced. My dad, a recovering alcoholic, relapsed last year.

Abby, I am desperate. When Miles drinks even the slightest amount, he smashes plates and mirrors, pounds his fists into doors and grabs me roughly. I'm deeply afraid that when he is very intoxicated he may one day seriously injure me. Miles is also severely depressed, so I'm constantly on "suicide watch."

Even though I attend a local Alateen chapter and am in therapy, my schoolwork is suffering, my relationships are floundering, and I'm depressed, isolated and overwhelmed. Part of me doesn't want to see my father anymore, but the other part feels extremely guilty and like I should just deal with everything on my own. Which part is right?

CONFLICTED IN WISCONSIN

DEAR CONFLICTED: The part that's telling you to avoid your father until you're sure he's back on the wagon and no longer intimidating or violent. That little voice you're hearing is your instinct for survival.

Also, you should not be on "suicide watch." At 14, you do not have the tools to save your father from his self-destructive impulses. Under no circumstances should you be alone with him until he's dry again.

After the treatment you have experienced and the stress to which you have been subjected, it is not unusual to feel depressed, isolated and overwhelmed. That's why it is so important that you continue talking frankly with your therapist and Alateen group, where other members have had similar experiences and can relate.

Readers, for those of you who are unfamiliar with Al-Anon/Alateen, which have been mentioned before in my column, this organization offers an informative booklet online that can be downloaded, and also in softcover, free of charge. The title is "Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2008." To view it online (in English, Spanish or French), log on to www.Al-AnonFamilyGroups.net. To order a printed copy, e-mail wso@al-anon.org or write: Al-Anon Family Groups Inc., Attn: AFA 2008, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: It has happened again! Every year I make my list of New Year's resolutions, and within two weeks I have broken my vow. My downfall is bingeing on sweets, so this year I resolved to swear off chocolate.

Last night I was feeling tired and depressed, and I "found" a large chocolate bar with almonds I had stashed at the back of one of the kitchen cupboards and ate the whole thing. I'm disgusted with myself.

Every year you print your list of New Year's resolutions. But now many people actually stick to them, and if so, now do they do it? Have you any tips?

CHOCOHOLIC IN NORFOLK, VA.

DEAR CHOCOHOLIC: Please stop beating up on yourself. You're not the only person who has broken a New Year's resolution. The majority of people do it sooner or later.

I do have some suggestions for establishing healthier habit patterns, and I'm pleased to share them with you:

(1) Decide what you want to achieve, but be realistic in setting your goals.

(2) Get support from friends and family.

(3) If you're trying to eliminate a bad habit, then make a plan and substitute a good habit in its place.

(4) Understand that we can learn more from our mistakes than our successes. If you slip up, don't give up. Forgive yourself and then rededicate yourself.

(5) When you do well, don't take it for granted. Look in a mirror and praise yourself out loud. Affirmations provide strong reinforcement.

And last, but not least, remember that you're not a bad person for backsliding on a New Year's resolution. If people were perfect, there would be no need for a Dear Abby.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*

• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

Combo (Print and Online)*

• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)

• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:

- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

Apartment For Rent (in Beach Road, Garapan) One (1) Bedroom fully furnished with back-up generator and 24 hour water, washer & dryer facilities in the building. For inquiries, pls. call 322-6183

Apartment Room for Rent
2 bed room $230.00, Koblerville.
Contact: 288-0728.

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 MANAGER, (TOUR SALES) (SUN 1546)
Salary:$650.00-$800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Young Shin Corporation dba Green Line Tour @483-3332.

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2 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (SUN 1547)
Salary:$3.05-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Dani Corporation dba Sabana II @233-2058.

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1 WATCH REPAIRER (SUN 1548)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employer to provide housing at a charge $100.00/monthly; employer to provide food at a charge $100.00/monthly; free transportation; free medical expenses & free workers compensation. Contact: B&G Ent., Corporation @234-6829.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (SUN 1549)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; 3x a day food; workmen's compensation & medical are free. Contact: RDA Enterprise, Inc. dba Mary's Bakery @234-6694.

1 COOK (SUN 1550)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; workmen's compensation & medical are free. Contact: RDA Enterprise, Inc. dba Mary's Bakery @234-6694.

5 BAKER (SUN 1551)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; workmen's compensation & medical are free. Contact: RDA Enterprise, Inc. dba Mary's Bakery @234-6694.

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1 GENERAL MANAGER (SUN 1552)
Salary:$1,750.00/monthly. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical expenses to be provided by company on all work related sickness & workmen's compensation insurance. Contact: Mugen Corporation @323-9238.

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1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (SUN 1553)
Salary:$4.20/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; self provided food; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

1 SYSTEM ANALYST PROG. (SUN 1554)
Salary:$8.25/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

1 ACCOUNTANT (SUN 1555)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

1 ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN (SUN 1556)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

1 SALES SUPERVISOR (SUN 1557)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (SUN 1558)
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: $100.00/monthly charge housing; $100.00/monthly charge food & medical. Contact: Lee. Chong Nam @322-5578/483-3636.

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1 GEN. BLDG. MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (SUN 1559)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Workmans compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Luzviminda F. Arriola dba PKCL Enterprises @256-3864.

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1 VENDOR (SUN 1560)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; provide own food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Josemary T. Tumaquip dba TC BBQ Stand/TC Services Ent., @287-3170/789-7605.

1 MAINTENANCE (SUN 1561)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; provide own food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Josemary T. Tumaquip dba TC BBQ Stand/TC Services Ent., @287-3170/789-7605.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (SUN 1561)
Salary:$4.70/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; medical provided & workers compensation provided. Contact: Japan Water Systems CNMI Corp. dba JWS Saipan @322-8602.

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1 CARPENTER (SUN 1562)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Free housing; employee provides food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: Sablan Enterprises Inc. @234-2585.

1 ACCOUNTANT (SUN 1563)
Salary:$3.55-$5.75/hour. Benefits: Free housing; employee provides food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: Sablan Enterprises Inc. @234-2585.

1 MASON (SUN 1564)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Free housing; employee provides food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: Sablan Enterprises Inc. @234-2585.

1 HOLLOW BLOCK MAKER (SUN 1565)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Free housing; employee provides food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: Sablan Enterprises Inc. @234-2585.

1 MAINTENANCE, BLDG. REPAIRER (SUN 1566)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Free housing; employee provides food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: Sablan Enterprises Inc. @234-2585.

1 PAINTER (SUN 1567)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Free housing; employee provides food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: Sablan Enterprises Inc. @234-2585.

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1 MAINTENANCE/BUILDING REPAIRER (SUN 1568)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free (1 or 2 duty meal); medical & workers compensation provided. Repatriation by employer. Contact: MISA Enterprises, Inc. @234-6900.

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1 ELECTRICIAN (SUN 1569)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Tropical Gardens Inc. dba Saipan Zoo @322-5711.

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1 CARPENTER (SUN 1570)
Salary:$3.05-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self provide food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Pacific International Marianas Inc. dba Midway Motors @234-7524.

• FOR SALE • FOR SALE • FOR SALE • FOR SALE •

27' 8" Farallon FG Boat with 318hp Volvo Diesel $15K. Cpt. Terry 433-0326, 287-0461

4"X5" Beseler B&W enlarger, chromegy color enlarger, paper cutter, styles trays, Norman P2000wts, studio strobes with 2 heads, softbox $300. Call 433-0326, 287-0461

Calumet 4"X5" View camera with 90mm Caltar lens, tripod, film holders and extras $150. Call 433-0326

3 Penn Sen. 14/o reels with rods, $250 ea. 3 Penn international 50TW with rods $250 ea, 4 Penn Sen. 9/0 with rods, $125 ea.

Mahogany Bunk Bed with Serta mattress, $200

Whirlpool Electric Range, $150

Detecto 200lb scale, $100

Denyo/Yanmar Diesel 5KV Generator, electric start 110/220 with extra motors, $1200.

• FOR SALE • FOR SALE • FOR SALE • FOR SALE •

COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy T. Villagomez through the Coastal Resources Management Office (CRMO) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 9:00 A.M. at the CRM conference room, 1st floor Morgen Building, Oleai, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
a) Call to Order
b) Roll Call

II. PERMIT APPLICATION

FPA Pacific Corporation Quarry – CRM Permit no. TMS-2008-X-016
a. Permit application/summary by CRMO
b. Discussion by CRM Agencies/CRMO
c. Permit Status (CRMO/CRM Agencies)

III. OTHER MATTERS
IV. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. [Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.]

JOHN B. JOYNER, Ph.D.
Director

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235-NEWS

McNamee says he injected Clemens' wife

WASHINGTON (AP)— It's become a daily routine: A new element of Brian McNamee's "I injected Roger Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone" story emerges - and Clemens' attorneys call the pitcher's former personal trainer a liar. The latest, and quite possibly oddest, twist involves Clemens' wife.

McNamee told congressional investigators he injected Debbie Clemens with HGH - at the seven-time Cy Young Award winner's direction - before the couple posed for a 2003 Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition photo shoot, a lawyer familiar with his testimony said Friday.

The lawyer spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because details of Thursday's testimony have not been publicly released. McNamee's statements about Debbie Clemens were first reported by the New York Daily News on its Web site Friday.

Roger Clemens and McNamee are scheduled to testify publicly Wednesday at a hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. McNamee told baseball investigator George Mitchell that he injected Clemens at least 16 times with steroids and HGH in 1998, 2000 and 2001, allegations the star pitcher repeatedly has denied.

Clemens did not comment on the latest accusation, which came out as he wrapped up a second day of face-to-face meetings with members of Congress. Clemens' lawyers, Rusty Hardin and Lanny Breuer, did not directly address the issue when asked about it.

"Did Roger get the Cy Young 'cause his wife took the HGH?" Breuer asked.

Referring to McNamee, Hardin said: "This guy is a colossal liar, and he has absolutely no shame."

Asked specifically about the portion of the report that said Clemens played a role in what happened, Hardin said: "To say that Roger directed that kind of thing is a colossal lie."

Members of the committee and their staff are not supposed to discuss what is said at a congressional deposition; a witness and his lawyers may.

"I will not confirm or deny it. I think it's inappropriate for any purported testimony from yesterday to be revealed," said one of McNamee's lawyers, Richard Emery. "The issue in this case is Roger Clemens' use of steroids and his failure to own up to it."

The committee's Republican general counsel, Keith Ausbrook said: "I have no reason to believe anybody on the committee leaked that, and I have no comment on the content."

Clemens delivered his sworn testimony over five hours Tuesday, then spent Thursday and Friday doing his best imitation of a K Street lobbyist. He met with 12 lawmakers Thursday, then another seven Friday, meaning Clemens has spoken with nearly half of the committee's 41 members.

After McNamee's seven-hour deposition Thursday, his lawyers showed reporters two color photos they brought to the committee, showing items such as needles and steroid vials they say McNamee saved for several years and, when tested, will link Clemens to the use of performance-enhancing drugs.

"That was sort of weird, you must admit," New York Democrat Edolphus Towns said after his Clemens session Friday. "For seven years, you hold onto it? That's longer than Monica Lewinsky kept it."

With his lawyers and a PR person in tow, Clemens made his way to the office of Rep. Danny Davis, an Illinois Democrat, shortly after 9:30 a.m., and the Rocket did not leave Capitol Hill until about 4 p.m.

"It's highly unusual, and that's why I think one would try to determine the rationale for it. What is he trying to accomplish?" Davis said in an interview with the AP before Clemens arrived. "I am willing to hear him out and hear what he has to say."

And while Clemens was heading home to Texas on Friday night, his camp mentioned the possibility of a news conference Monday and more congressional visits Tuesday.

"I've met a number of the congressmen before," Clemens said at one point in the morning. "It's been great. It's not my first trip to Washington."

Several lawmakers characterized the sessions as more social than substantive, noting that Clemens discussed his charitable work.

Others brought up that Clemens or his lawyers disparaged McNamee.

"The meeting was at his request, and only as a matter of courtesy did I meet with him," District of Columbia Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton said. "I don't usually meet with witnesses. I don't understand that they serve a purpose, because we don't do a hearing in advance of a hearing."

Also on the witness list for Wednesday are New York Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte, who acknowledged using HGH; former major leaguer Chuck Knoblauch; and former New York Mets clubhouse employee Kirk Radomski, who was sentenced Friday in U.S. District Court in San Francisco to five years' probation after cooperating with Mitchell. Radomski pleaded guilty in April to distributing steroids and money laundering, and he led investigators to McNamee.

After his sitdown with Towns, Clemens waited around for a photo op, shaking hands with the congressman but not taking questions from reporters. Before Clemens could leave Towns' office, two members of the representative's staff stopped him to pose for pictures.

A few times during the day, as Clemens walked from the Rayburn House Office Building to Cannon HOB and back to Rayburn, he was asked to sign autographs by people in the hallways.

The 45-year-old Clemens, who pitched for the Yankees last season and ranks eighth in baseball history with 354 wins, carried a black three-ring binder as he made his rounds.

"For me, the question is still out. The verdict is not in," Davis said after his 30 minutes with Clemens. "I'm not certain if he did or if he did not" use steroids.

AP

Brian McNamee, former personal trainer to Roger Clemens, leaves after meeting with the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee on Capitol Hill Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008, in Washington.

MLB steroids dealer gets probation

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)— Former New York Mets clubhouse attendant Kirk Radomski avoided jail and was sentenced Friday to five years' probation after cooperating with baseball's investigation into the use of performance-enhancing drugs.

Radomski was ordered by U.S. District Court Judge Susan Illston to pay an $18,575 fine after he admitted selling steroids, human growth hormone and speed to dozens of current and former major leaguers.

"These are very, very serious offenses," said Illston, who lectured that some of Radomski's best customers served as role models to children.

Radomski pleaded guilty last April to distributing steroids and laundering money from 1995 until Dec. 14, 2005, when agents raided his Long Island home.

Radomski led investigators to Brian McNamee, the former Yankees strength coach who claimed he injected Roger Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone at least 16 times from 1998-01, an allegation the seven-time Cy Young Award winner vehemently denies.

As part of his plea agreement, Radomski was required to cooperate with federal investigators and former Senate majority leader George Mitchell, who headed baseball's doping probe.

Radomski is required to continue that cooperation. He is scheduled to testify along with Clemens and McNamee on Wednesday before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

"It sounds like Radomski provided a lot of information that was helpful to the government," said Earl Ward, McNamee's lead lawyer. "They rewarded him for that."

Radomski's lawyer, John Reilly, said outside court that federal officials interviewed Radomski under oath Thursday, but declined to say whether Radomski was asked about Clemens.

Radomski, who had no prior offenses, had faced no more than six months in prison. Assistant U.S. attorney Matt Parrella recommended that Radomski receive probation because of his extensive cooperation.

There's a culture of "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" when it comes to steroid abuse in sports and Radomski's naming of names "is at least a first step to turning that around," Parrella said.

The 38-year-old Radomski walked timidly into court about 30 minutes before his case was called and was joined in the gallery by IRS Special Agent Jeff Novitzky, who sat next to Radomski.

Radomski said little when the judge asked him for his thoughts before meting out his sentence. He apologized to his family and friends and asked the judge for forgiveness.

"Our privacy has been seriously impacted," he said. In a thick New York accent, he declined comment outside court.

Richard Emery, another on McNamee's lawyers, said Clemens and the pitcher's lead attorney should learn from the way Radomski was treated by prosecutors.

"Rusty Hardin and Roger Clemens ought to listen to Matt Parrella loudly and clearly and understand the jeopardy they're putting Roger Clemens in by not cooperating and telling the truth," Emery said.

Radomski's downfall began in February 2005 when a person charged with real estate fraud who had a baseball contact agreed to work undercover with the FBI in exchange for leniency. The informant's contact put that person in touch with Radomski. The informant bought steroids and made numerous telephone calls to Radomski throughout 2005, with federal investigators watching and listening the entire time.

The informant told investigators that Radomski became the biggest steroid supplier to baseball players in 2003 after federal authorities shut down the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, which was the headquarters of a performance-enhancing drug ring catering to elite athletes.

AP

Kirk Radomski stands outside of his business in St. James, N.Y., in this Dec. 13, 2007 file photo. Radomski, a former baseball clubhouse attendant who implicated dozens of major leaguers in the use of performance-enhancing drugs, was sentenced Friday Feb. 8, 2008 in San Francisco to five years probation for distributing steroids and laundering money

Garnett-less Celtics edge Timberwolves 88-86

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Leon Powe made a layup at the buzzer to lift the Boston Celtics to an 88-86 victory over the Timberwolves on Friday night as an injured Kevin Garnett could only watch his return to Minnesota.

It was a wild ending to a memorable night.

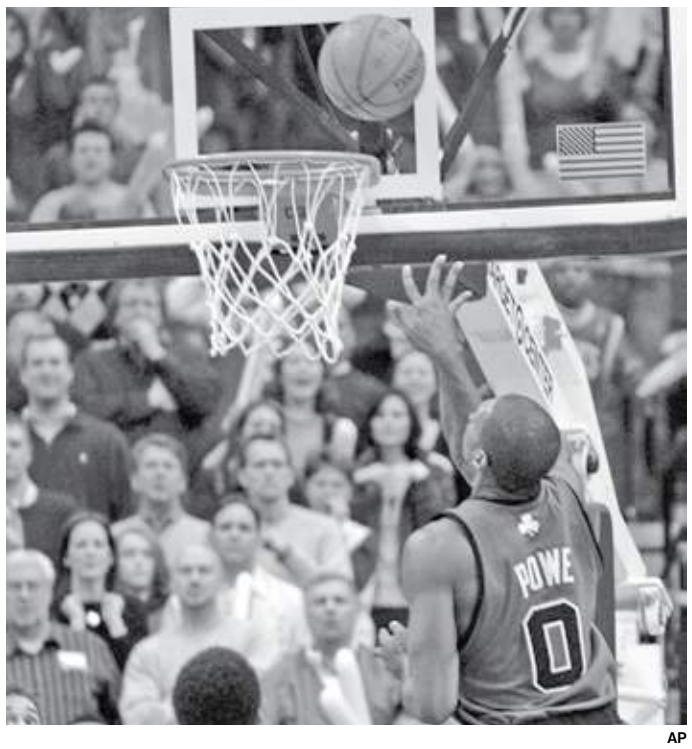
The Timberwolves had the ball with the scored tied 86-86 with 28 seconds left. Marko Jaric missed a 3-pointer and teammate Craig Smith rebounded the ball and tried to kick it back out.

But Ray Allen stepped in front and stole the pass and raced the other way with the clock ticking down. A frantic scramble under the basket ended with Powe putting back a miss just before the buzzer sounded.

The play was reviewed and confirmed that Powe just beat the horn.

Paul Pierce had 18 points and six assists and Allen scored 17 for the Celtics, who were playing their sixth straight game without Garnett, out with an abdominal strain.

Al Jefferson scored 10 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter for the Wolves.



AP

Boston Celtics' Leon Powe, right, scores the winning basket at the buzzer as the Celtics beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 88-86 in an NBA basketball game Friday, Feb. 8, 2008 in Minneapolis.

Suns 103, SuperSonics 99

At Phoenix, Wally Szczerbiak called a timeout when Seattle had none remaining with 15.1 seconds to play, allowing Phoenix to pull out the victory.

The Suns went 32-of-32 at the foul line, one shy of the franchise record, including three in a row by Steve Nash at the end.

Seattle trailed 100-99 and had the ball out of bounds beneath its own basket with 15.1 seconds to play, but Szczerbiak could find no one open and signaled timeout. However, the Sonics didn't have any left, resulting in a technical foul.

Lakers 117, Magic 113

At Orlando, Florida, Kobe Bryant had 36 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, and Pau Gasol scored 30 points, leading Los Angeles to a wild victory.

Derek Fisher added 14 points and seven assists for the Lakers, who gave up a season-high 44 points in the first quarter, but had enough defense at the end to win for the fourth time in the last five games.

Spurs 99, Knicks 93, OT

At New York, Michael Finley made the tying 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left in regulation and San Antonio dominated overtime as New York matched a season high with their eighth straight loss.

Tim Duncan had 21 points and 14 rebounds for the Spurs, who trailed by 18 points in the third quarter, but scored the first seven points in OT. Finley finished with 17 points.

Pistons 91, Trail Blazers 82

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Chauncey Billups and Detroit took advantage of Brandon Roy's absence and beat Portland for its seventh straight victory.

Roy missed the game due to a death in his family, and Portland didn't have another answer for Billups in the opening 12 minutes when he scored all 17 of his points. The Pistons led by double figures for nearly all the remaining three quarters.

Cavaliers 100, Hawks 95

At Atlanta, LeBron James scored 26 points, Ira Newble added a season-best 18 for shorthanded Cleveland, missing four of its top seven scorers because of injuries.

James came up huge at the end to help the Cavaliers bounce back after Atlanta rallied for the lead in the final quarter.

Mavericks 92, Grizzlies 81

At Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 21 points while also getting some rest and a lot of help in Dallas' victory over Memphis.

The Grizzlies played on the road for the first time since trading away Pau Gasol, and lost their seventh straight away from home.

Clippers 102, Raptors 98

At Toronto, Corey Maggette matched his season-high with 35 points, Cuttino Mobley had 19 and Los Angeles beat Toronto.

Al Thornton had 19 points and Chris Kaman had 16 points and 12 rebounds for the Clippers, who had lost 10 of their last 11 road games.

Nets 104, Bobcats 90

At Charlotte, North Carolina, Jason Kidd has his first triple-double since demanding a trade and Richard Jefferson scored 23 points to lead New Jersey.

Kidd had 19 points, 11 rebounds and 13 assists in his league-leading 12th triple-double, but his first since Jan. 25, three days before he went public with his desire to be elsewhere by this month's trade deadline.

Kings 117, Jazz 104

At Sacramento, Calif., Kevin Martin scored 27 points and the Sacramento Kings pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat Utah 117-104, ending the Jazz's 10-game winning streak.

The Jazz had their winning streak end at Arco Arena, where they have lost 11 of their last 14 trips, most of them lopsided. Utah also lost for just the third time in 19 games since Dec. 29, when a nearly monthlong slump left them at 16-16.

Nuggets 111, Wizards 100

At Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored a career-high 49 points to lead the Denver Nuggets past the Washington Wizards 111-100 for their ninth win in their last 10 home games.

Anthony, who will join teammate Allen Iverson as an All-Star starter in New Orleans later this month, made 19 of 25 shots from the floor and made all eight of his free throws in the third-highest individual scoring game in the NBA this season.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	38	9	.809	
Toronto	26	22	.542	12 1/2
New Jersey	21	29	.420	18 1/2
Philadelphia	20	30	.400	19 1/2
New York	14	36	.280	25 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	32	20	.615	
Washington	24	25	.490	6 1/2
Atlanta	21	25	.457	8
Charlotte	18	32	.360	13
Miami	9	39	.188	21

Central Division

Detroit	36	13	.735	
Cleveland	28	21	.571	8
Chicago	20	29	.408	16
Indiana	20	30	.400	16 1/2
Milwaukee	19	31	.380	17 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	34	15	.694	
New Orleans	33	15	.688	1/2
San Antonio	32	16	.667	1 1/2
Houston	29	20	.592	5
Memphis	13	36	.265	21

Northwest Division

Utah	32	19	.627	
Denver	30	19	.612	1
Portland	28	21	.571	3
Seattle	13	37	.260	18 1/2
Minnesota	10	38	.208	20 1/2

Pacific Division

Phoenix	35	15	.700	
L.A. Lakers	32	17	.653	2 1/2
Golden State	29	20	.592	5 1/2
Sacramento	23	25	.479	11
L.A. Clippers	16	31	.340	17 1/2

Friday's Games

L.A. Lakers 117, Orlando 113
L.A. Clippers 102, Toronto 98
New Jersey 104, Charlotte 90
Cleveland 100, Atlanta 95
San Antonio 99, New York 93, OT
Boston 88, Minnesota 86
Detroit 91, Portland 82
Dallas 92, Memphis 81
Phoenix 103, Seattle 99
Sacramento 117, Utah 104
Denver 111, Washington 100

PEBBLE BEACH NATIONAL PRO-AM SCORES

Tim Herron	68	69	137
Robert Floyd	68	70	138
Michael Allen	68	70	138
J.B. Holmes	68	70	138
Nicholas Thompson	69	69	138
Jason Day	69	70	139
Peter Tomasulo	71	68	139
Mark Wilson	68	71	139
Dudley Hart	69	70	139
Jay Williamson	68	71	139
Jeff Quinney	69	70	139
Kris Cox	68	72	140
Fredrik Jacobson	73	67	140
Vijay Singh	70	70	140
Parker McLachlin	70	70	140
Steve Lowery	69	71	140
Kevin Streelman	70	70	140
Kevin Na	71	69	140
Jim McGovern	71	69	140
Kent Jones	66	74	140
James Driscoll	72	68	140
D.A. Points	68	73	141
Davis Love III	70	71	141
J.J. Henry	70	71	141
Ryan Moore	71	70	141
John Merrick	71	70	141
Mathew Goggin	71	70	141
Chris Riley	73	68	141
Justin Leonard	70	71	141
Olin Browne	68	73	141
Dustin Johnson	73	68	141
Robert Damron	71	70	141
Jin Park	72	69	141
Brad Elder	73	68	141
John Mallinger	67	74	141
Jonathan Kaye	70	71	141
Roland Thatcher	67	74	141
Brent Geiberger	69	73	142
Marco Dawson	73	69	142
Corey Pavin	73	69	142
Steve Allan	69	73	142
Jeff Overton	70	72	142
Brandel Chamblee	69	73	142
John Riegger	72	70	142
Tim Petrovic	76	66	142
Matt Jones	70	72	142
Jonathan Moore	70	72	142
Rocco Mediate	72	70	142
Ryan Armour	71	71	142
Padraig Harrington	72	70	142
Andrew Buckle	69	73	142
Y.E. Yang	69	73	142
Daisuke Maruyama	71	72	143
David Frost	71	72	143
Matt Kuchar	74	69	143
Ryan Palmer	78	65	143
Lee Janzen	74	69	143
Joe Ogilvie	74	69	143
Chris Stroud	73	70	143
Brian Davis	72	71	143
Alejandro Canizares	70	73	143
Craig Kanada	72	71	143
Phil Mickelson	71	72	143
Doug LaBelle II	70	74	144
Tag Ridings	73	71	144
Carlos Franco	71	73	144
Tom Pernice, Jr.	70	74	144
Paul Claxton	74	70	144
Richard S. Johnson	73	71	144
Skip Kendall	73	71	144
Jason Gore	70	74	144
Pat Perez	74	70	144
Brad Adamonis	67	77	144
Jason Allred	74	70	144
Grant Waite	73	71	144
Todd Demsey	68	76	144
Gavin Coles	74	70	144
Dan Forsman	71	73	144
Andres Romero	73	71	144
Daniel Chopra	69	75	144
Andrew Magee	74	70	144
Alex Cejka	72	72	144
Mike Weir	75	69	144
Bob May	74	70	144
Marc Turnesa	70	74	144
Ken Duke	75	70	145
Frank Lickliter II	72	73	145
Greg Kraft	72	73	145
Rick Leibovich	74	71	145
Charley Hoffman	70	75	145
Jeff Maggert	72	73	145
Tom Scherrer	70	75	145
Scott Sterling	73	72	145
Tommy Gainey	73	72	145
Charlie Wi	73	72	145
Omar Uresti	72	73	145
Tom Lehman	75	70	145
Jimmy Walker	72	73	145
Eric Axley	74	71	145
Johnson Wagner	72	73	145
Tom Byrum	76	69	145
Brandt Snedeker	73	72	145
Patrick Sheehan	74	72	146
Chris DiMarco	74	72	146
Brenden Pappas	76	70	146
Greg Norman	76	70	146
J.P. Hayes	72	74	146
John Huston	73	73	146
Ted Purdy	71	75	146
Jim Furyk	71	75	146
Paul Stankowski	74	72	146
Kenneth Ferrie	72	74	146
Craig Barlow	74	72	146
Michael Sim	72	74	146
Jeff Gove	72	74	146
Shane Bertsch	77	70	147
Steve Pate	72	75	147
Robert Gamez	74	73	147
Hunter Mahan	75	72	147
Joel Kribel	74	73	147
Jim Gallagher, Jr.	77	70	147
Duffy Waldorf	71	76	147
Chris Smith	76	71	147
Nick Watney	76	71	147
D.J. Trahan	74	73	147
Tim Clark	73	74	147
Harrison Frazar	72	76	148
Scott McCarron	76	72	148
Garrett Willis	73	75	148
Dean Wilson	75	73	148
Richard Johnson	78	70	148
Chad Collins	76	72	148
Martin Laird	73	75	148
Larry Mize	72	76	148
Jonathan Byrd	75	73	148
Paul Goydos	73	75	148
Glen Day	74	74	148
Len Mattiace	75	73	148
Dicky Pride	79	69	148
Brian Bateman	71	77	148
Spike McRoy	75	73	148
Bo Van Pelt	74	74	148
Michael Letzig	70	78	148
Peter Jacobsen	73	75	148
Travis Perkins	76	72	148
Mathias Gronberg	75	74	149
Colt Knost	77	72	149
Bob Sowards	76	73	149
John Morse	73	76	149
Jay Delsing	74	76	150
Bob Burns	75	75	150
David Lutterus	74	76	150
Steve Elkington	78	72	150
Greg Owen	73	77	150
Billy Andrade	75	75	150
Justin Bolli	74	76	150
Ron Whittaker	74	77	151
Mike Wilson	74	77	151
Cody Freeman	72	80	152
Brett Rumford	78	74	152
Jason Dufner	78	74	152
John Daly	79	74	153
David Duval	75	78	153
Bob Heintz	74	79	153
Willie Wood	77	76	153
Tadd Fujikawa	72	81	153
Kyle Thompson	76	77	153
Mark Brooks	77	76	153
Mike Heinen	76	78	154
Kevin Sutherland	76	78	154
Guy Boros	75	79	154
Craig Stadler	74	80	154
Mark Hensby	76	78	154
Ryan Dillon	78	77	155
J.L. Lewis	76	79	155
Phil Tataurangi	76	79	155
Tim Wilkinson	74	82	156
Ross Fisher	78	79	157
Joey Sindelar	79	80	159
Keith Clearwater	85	76	161

By The Associated Press

Herron takes 1-shot lead at Pebble Beach

PEBBLE BEACH, California (AP)—Tim Herron used a new putter for the first time in seven years and shot a 3-under 69 on greens with a reputation as the most unpredictable on the U.S. PGA Tour to take a one-shot lead in the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

"Everyone who makes the cut is going to be right in the tournament," said Herron, who was at 7-under 137.

The cut won't be made until after Saturday, when the 180-man field has played all three courses in the rotation, but one look at the muddled leaderboard makes it perfectly clear what Herron is talking about.

A 12-foot birdie putt on his final hole at the Poppy Hills course gave him a one-shot lead over four players, including FBR Open winner J.B. Holmes and Nicholas Thompson, who was tied for the lead until missing a 20-inch putt on No. 8 at Pebble Beach, his 17th hole.

Holmes was fortunate to stay one shot behind after his tee shot on the 18th at Pebble Beach dropped into that big water hazard left of the fairway known as the Pacific Ocean. He took a drop, belted a fairway metal onto the green and two-putted for par.

Jason Day, the 20-year-old Australian and youngest member of the U.S. tour, had a 70 at Spyglass Hill and was among a half-dozen players at 5-under 139.

Three dozen players were within four shots of the lead.

That group did not include defending champion Phil Mickelson, who played his final 11 holes at Spyglass with no birdies and three bogeys for a 72, although he still was in range at 1-under 143.

"This is the round that could've been," Mickelson said. "I really could have had it going. I had a number of birdie opportunities to be well under par and just gave it away."

Mickelson joins the celebrities and corporate VIPs at Pebble Beach on Saturday, when the tournament might finally take shape.

"If I shoot a good round tomorrow ... at Pebble, you can shoot 6 or 7 under and get back in it, and that's what I need to do," he said.

Davis Love III was disappointed when he walked off Pebble Beach with a 71 until he looked at the leaderboard behind the green and realized his 3-under 141 was right in the mix.

"It's harder than you think," Love said. "The ball isn't going anywhere."

He left a number of iron shots well short of the hole to limit his birdie chances, but playing for the first time in four months because of ankle surgery, he had no complaints about the way he walked or played. Love has two months to qualify for the Masters, and he could finish in the top four, it might be enough to qualify for the Accenture Match Play Championship in two weeks.

"I've got to look at the positives," he said.

Tennis great Chris Evert got to watch her fiance, Greg Norman, play all 18 holes on Friday, and the Shark played most of them well. He shot a 70 at Spyglass and was at 2-over 146, needing a low round at Pebble Beach to make his first cut on the PGA Tour in three years.

McNamee says he injected Clemens' wife

It's become a daily routine: A new element of Brian McNamee's "I injected Roger Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone" story emerges—and Clemens' attorneys call the pitcher's former personal trainer a liar. **25**

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Super Bowl takes center stage

It was as if time stood still on Saipan during Super Bowl XLII as fans of both the New England Patriots and the New York Giants stayed glued to their TV sets to witness history in the making. **27**

Islanders trail Kuwait in Davis Cup, 2-0

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Pacific Oceania currently trails Kuwait, 2-0, after the first two rubber of the 2008 Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group II tie on Friday at the Bassam Al-Motawa Tennis Center in Mishref, Kuwait.

Pacific Oceania carryovers Juan Sebastian Langton of Samoa and the Solomon Islands' Michael Leong took on separate ATP-ranked opponents in the three-day tie at the Middle East country.

Langton suffered a 1-6, 1-6, 2-6 thrashing from Kuwait's top ranked Mohammad Ghareeb in the first singles game.

Ghareeb is currently ranked 434 in singles and 288 in doubles in the ATP Tour and now improves his Davis Cup record to 42-17 overall and 31-8 in singles play after the win over Langton.

Langton now dropped to 18-17 in his overall appearance in the Davis Cup and now holds an 8-9 mark in singles matches.

And as if taking on a more experienced player wasn't enough, Langton's problems had been compounded after the airline he flew into Kuwait lost his racquet bag and has been unhelpful in getting it to him in time for the tie. As a result, Langton has had to use borrowed racquets during the match.

Even the Islander's top ranked netter Leong suffered a stinging 1-6, 1-6, 4-6, loss from seeded Kuwaiti netter Abdullah Magdas, who boasts of an ATP ranking of 980 in singles and 1,320 in doubles.

Magdas played college tennis in the U.S., and former Pacific Oceania Davis Cupper West Nott of the Marshall Islands has provided the team some background on him.

Langton

Leong

The doubles match was still being played at press time while the reverse singles will be played today.

Pacific Oceania non-playing captain Cyrille Mainguy of Vanuatu teamed up Leong with Cyril Jacobe for the doubles, but this can be changed up to an hour before the match starts.

Leong and Jacobe will be up against Ghareeb and Magdas after being named by Kuwait team captain Khaled Al Foudari.

The Pacific Oceania-Kuwait tie concludes today, with the reverse singles pitting Leong against Ghareeb in the first match and Langton and Magdas squaring off in the second.

Mohammad-Khaliq Siddiq and Ahmad Rabeea Muhammad complete the four-man Kuwait Davis Cup team for its tie against the Islanders, which also has Leon So'onalole of Samoa as the other member of the Pacific-Oceania team.

Mainguy succeeded the CNMI's Jeff Race at the helm of the Islanders while Gerard Winter of New Caledonia serves as the team manager for the first tie.

Kuwait leads the head-to-head against Pacific Oceania, 2-1. Other Group II ties that are being played are between China and Lebanon, Indonesia and Hong Kong, and Oman and New Zealand.

The winner of the Pacific Oceania-Kuwait tie will face the victor of the Oman-New Zealand match in the second round, The winning nation will be promoted to Asia/Oceania Group I in 2009 while the losing countries will be relegated to Group III next year.

Heo is NMASA's January top athlete

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Ji Hoon Heo earned the year's first Athlete of the Month plum when the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association voted him as January's best sports personality.

The 15-year-old Heo saw action in three International Tennis Federation-organized events as part of the ITF Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team in Australia where he competed against the best 18-and-under netters from the hosts and New Zealand.

Heo, in an email, said that he had no idea that he was selected as the NMASA athlete of the month. "I'm glad I became the January athlete of the month."

The Korean-born netter was invited to join the ITF Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team that played in the 2008 Ducats G.V. Junior Tennis Tournament, 2008 Australia Post Margaret Court Cup, and the 2008 CountryLink Victorian Junior Classic.

Heo's three-week long Australian tennis tour helped boost his confidence as he looks forward of joining more ITF-organized events this. "I feel a lot better and motivated after the Australia trip and I've been training a lot harder lately. My training has been going very well."

Heo played his best tennis in the CountryLink Victorian Junior Classic where he previously scored stunning upsets over seeded opponents before finally meeting his match in the boys' 16-and-under singles losing to Rory de Bouer in the semifinals.

He earned some consolation after becoming the only unseeded and non-Australian player that went up against homegrown and top-ranked opponents in the semifinals.

Heo

Heo then partnered with William O'Connell in the doubles division but lost both of their semis matches in the CountryLink Classic and Margaret Court Cup.

He also entered the semifinal round of the consolation draw of two age divisions in the Ducats Junior Classic and reached the quarterfinals of the singles division in the Margaret Court Cup.

Heo competed in his first Australian junior championship tournament after he was invited to become a member of the ITF Pacific Oceania Junior Touring Team late last year.

Heo received an invitation to join the ITF Pacific-Oceania Junior Touring Team in Australia last October. He left Saipan last Dec. 27 joining a group of Under-18 players that traveled around Australia from Dec. 30 to Jan. 18.

OFF THE BENCH

By BOB COLDEEN

Coldeen is longtime sports journalist in the CNMI and is the sports director of KSPN 2.

Spring is in the air

The ump got the call right. Again.

Mario Taitano, the CNMI man in blue at the Little League World Series where they mispronounced his name on ESPN, more like Mario Titanic– I wish I had a recording of ESPN's hatchet job on Tony Rogolifoi where they sounded out letters that are not even in his name - published a letter advocating the use of the island for baseball training as an economic activity.

Indeed, why not make Saipan the home of Korean baseball spring training?

The Lotte Giants are looking for a place next year, specifically Hawaii and Arizona. Saipan has two significant advantages: cheaper and closer to Korea. They got us beat to spades in terms of facilities. But then our Palacios playing field is actually pretty decent. Can't say the same about Kan Pacific, the only field on Saipan where I hated playing infield. Well yeah, that was awhile ago.

The Giants who play in Pusan led the league in attendance last year. They want a place to train where they can play practice games against other teams. Fans and media would come for that and Lao Lao Bay Golf Resort would be a popular place, I'm sure. Something about baseball and golf: most players like to tee off, it seems.

Saipan is limited by the number of teams it can attract at one time by having only two baseball fields. More teams require more fields. Joe Lizama told me Koblerville Sports Complex can only hold one baseball field and one softball field, but three scattered fields are better than two scattered fields. He said at least one team cancelled this year because they didn't want to share a practice field with another team.

It's like the Field of Dreams, "build it and they will come."

A training base is nice, but the real economic benefit would flow if multiple teams are able to come here and play exhibition games.

You ask, why not build a baseball complex with multiple fields in one place? And I say, only after I see a business and marketing plan, including a maintenance operational plan. If a training complex pays for itself and is a sure money-maker, then let's do it.

Korean baseball is exploding and we have a unique opportunity to capitalize on it. The plan may not be that difficult, but it should be done right. Not like the windows at the bottom of Ada Gym.

And then there is the spin-off benefit to the youth population. Hundreds of kids were on Palacios Field Friday night for the opening of the 2008 Little League season.

Four baseball leagues, three of them youth, use one field for their regular season at the same time. The addition of one more game-ready field would allow our boys to play more games, an important factor in preparing for international competition. The more you play, the better you will get.

Ah, the pop of the mitt, the whack of the bat: finally baseball is back. So is spring. And a new season.

Wow, one whole column on baseball and not one mention of Roger Clemens.